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THE ENGLISH WORKS OF GEORGE HERBERT

IN SIX VOLUMES

V

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Wilton House, the home of Herbert's kinsman, the Earl of Pembroke, a mile distant from Bemerton Rectory. See Vol. I, p. 39.

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THE ENGLISH WORKS OF

George Herbert

EDITED BY GEORGE HERBERT PALMER

VOLUME FIVE

BEMERTON POEMS

BOSTON AND NEW YORK

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN AND COMPANY

MDCCCCV

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VII

THE HAPPY PRIEST

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PREFACE

WITH this Group begins the last and briefest period of Herbert's life, a period remarkable for its productivity. It extends from his coming to Bemerton in 1630 to his death in 1633. In it THE COUNTRY PARSON was written and most of the eighty-six poems which here follow. No poem printed in Groups VII–XI is found in the Williams Manuscript, which I have elsewhere shown to have been probably drawn up about 1628. Some of these poems may proceed from the last years of the Crisis, but as they contain no reference to the struggle there described, I have not included them in that Group. Some, especially among those printed under the heading Bemerton Study, were probably written at least in part during the Cambridge years, and then, either by accident or design, were not copied into the manuscript lent to Ferrar in 1627–9. But substantially the poems of these five Groups are Bemerton poems. Their omission from the Williams Manuscript is *prima facie* evidence of date. Nearly all of them, outside Group VIII, contain allusions to the priestly character of the writer. Emotional depth and individual experience will be found in them to a degree unknown in the Cambridge period, and

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they very generally look back to a past different from that in which their author is now living.

The beginning of the Bemerton life brought to Herbert a joyful sense of attainment. The hopes of many years seemed now about to be realized. The great deed was done. He was no longer cumbered with political, social, or scholarly ties. He and God were to be alone, and his one interest henceforth was to be the priestly office. He set himself with characteristic energy to search out all the subtle significance which his present tasks might contain. His life should be as intellectually ordered, as coherent, as beautiful, as compact with rich suggestion, as his verse had been before. He codified his work; he studied from day to day what were the best ways of performing each petty portion of his stately office.

Walton gives a long account of Herbert's elaborate rationalization of the English ritual. This account is on its face open to doubt. How much of it proceeds from Herbert's mind, and how much from Walton's, is not clear. Walton had no acquaintance with Herbert, and this argumentative piece of history was written long after Herbert's death. Walton's Life, like that by Oley, was obviously intended to serve the useful purpose of an Anti-Puritan tract. But after all deductions, the argumentation seems well in keeping with Herbert's general temper. It is ever his way to make the most of what he finds at hand. He asks few

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ultimate questions, but turns all that tradition hands down to him into something rich and meaningful. Throughout this account he justifies the services of his Church because of their reasonableness, and not because they are authoritatively prescribed; and this is his method in his poems and THE COUNTRY PARSON. There, as here, he grounds the practices of the collective Church on the needs of the individual soul. On the whole, then, I believe Walton's pages on ritual may be accepted as a fair account of Herbert's disposition during the Bemerton years. He tried to bring into action and fill with ingenious, independent, and reverent intelligence all the resources of his little world. By this poetic development of ritual he sought to do for his people what he was at the same time doing for himself in THE COUNTRY PARSON. He "made it appear to them that the whole Service of the Church was a reasonable, and therefore an acceptable, Sacrifice to God." Always to his mind the way to render life glorious was to stuff every portion of it with thought, and delightedly to detect compacted reason where the dull mind contents itself with seeing only plain fact.

The present Group of poems is the expression of exuberant joy in at last reaching a long hoped for good. Few other Groups have so lyric a quality. After some study of the conditions of the priesthood, he sees that these are all summed up in the priest's abandonment of everything that can be

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called his own, and in his full absorption into the life of his Master. Such union, the realization of thoughts of love which had possessed him for many years, throws him into an intellectual ecstasy, and song after song is poured out expressing his delight. The ordinances of the Church, especially those connected with the Holy Supper, get a new meaning. The closing day is sacramental, and all the world resounds with God's praise.

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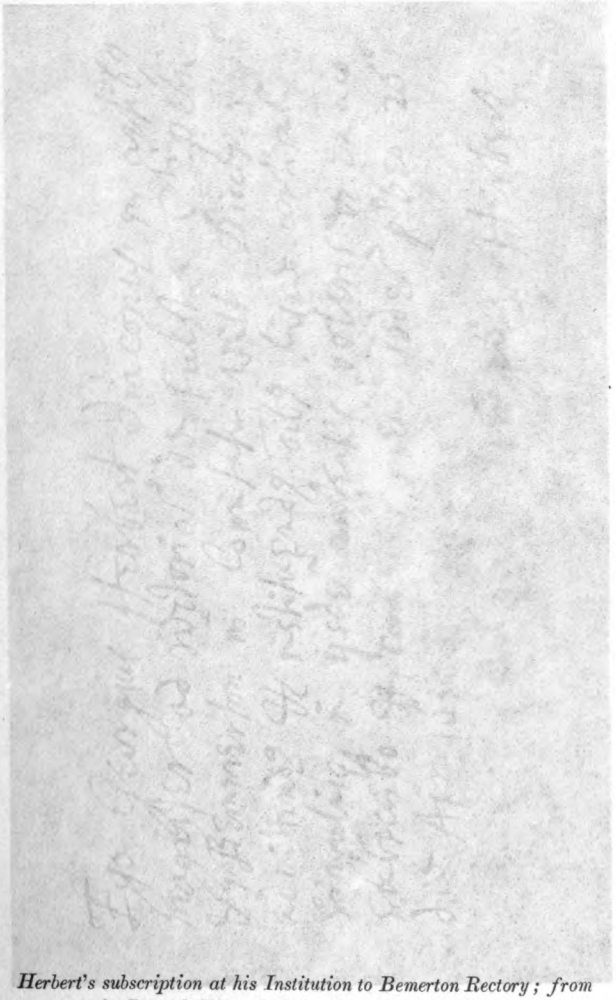

Herbert's subscription at his Institution to Bemerton Rectory; from the Record Office, Salisbury. *See Vol. I, p. 39.*

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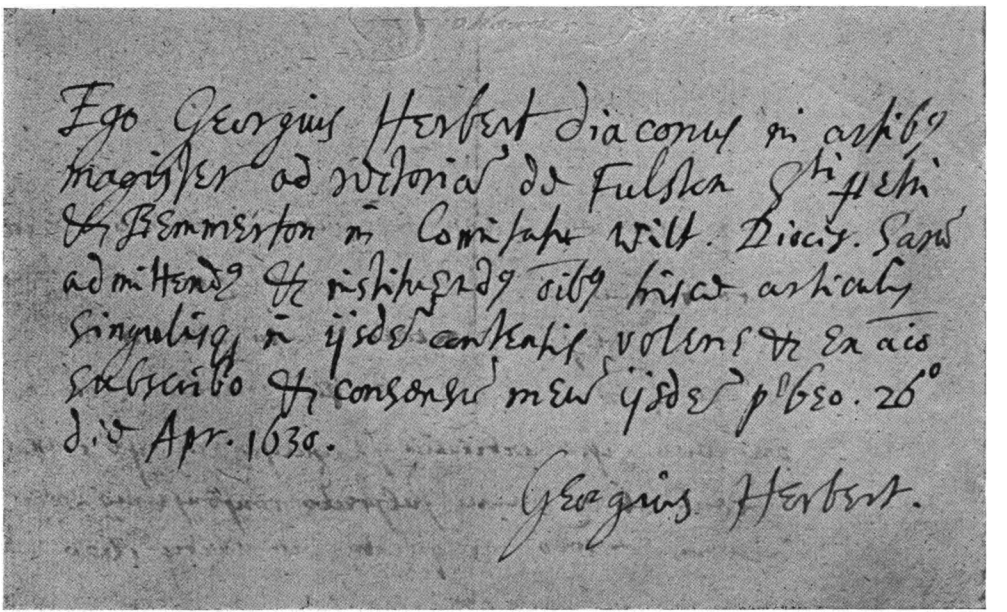
Ego Georgius Herbert diaconus in archiep magister ad victoriam de Fulston Stiffelti de Bemmerton in Comitatu Wilt. Diœc. Sarū admittendū et instituendū ejusd. hisce articulis singuliq. in ejusdē contextū volens et ea eis subscribo et consensū meū ejusdē p. 1630. 26° d. 8 Apr. 1630.

Georgius Herbert.

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THE HAPPY PRIEST

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DATE:

Not found in W. The first happiness either of taking orders or of settling at Bemerton.

METRE:

Used also in THE ROSE, IV, 185.

SUBJECT:

Having Thee, I have all.
Stanza i, What life will then be.
Stanza ii, What He will then be.
Stanza iii, What I shall then be.

NOTES:

1. John xiv, 6.
2. A way or road usually deprives us of breath.
4. Ed. 1633 reads *And such a*, throwing the line out of rhythm and out of conformity to the plan of the poem. I substitute the reading of B. and of the later editions.
6. *Thou art not only the feast, but the way to it:* COUNTRY PARSON, XXII. The same rhyme occurs again in FAITH, IV, 29, l. 6 and 8.
7. A *feast*, unlike common feasts, more enjoyable the longer it continues.
8. A *strength* which makes him who approaches strong.
10. As none can demand. Cf. PRAISE, IV, 193, l. 4; THE METHOD, V, 197, l. 6.
11. Romans viii, 35.

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THE CALL

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life:
  Such a Way as gives us breath,
Such a Truth as ends all strife,
  Such a Life as killeth death.

Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength:
  Such a Light as shows a feast,
Such a Feast as mends in length,
  Such a Strength as makes his guest.

Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart:
  Such a Joy as none can move,
Such a Love as none can part,
  Such a Heart as joyes in love.

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INTRODUCTORY:

"When at his Induction he was shut into Bemerton Church, being left there alone to Toll the Bell (as the Law requires him) he staid so much longer than an ordinary time that his Friend Mr. Woodnot looked in at the Church-window and saw him lie prostrate on the ground before the Alter; at which time and place (as he after told Mr. Woodnot) he set some Rules to himself for the future manage of his life; and then and there made a vow to labour to keep them:" Walton's Life.—AARON well illustrates the exquisite art of Herbert in allowing thought to dictate form. The standard of the priesthood being one, is fixed in five rhyming words: in his own head and heart the priest must be sound; from him music must go forth; it is his work to find rest for the sinful; his dress or exterior must express an inner purity. In successive stanzas, all having the same fixed rhyme, this scheme tests the divergent natures found in man. Swinburne, in his poem Eight Years Old, similarly employs a fixed set of rhymes for all the stanzas.

DATE:

Not found in W. Probably written after ordination at Bemerton.

METRE:

Unique.

SUBJECT:

The true priest.

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AARON

Holinesse on the head,
Light and perfections on the breast,
Harmonious bells below, raising the dead
To leade them unto life and rest;
Thus are true Aarons drest.

Profanenesse in my head,
Defects and darknesse in my breast,
A noise of passions ringing me for dead
Unto a place where is no rest;
Poore priest thus am I drest.

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NOTES:

1. Exodus xxviii, 36.
2. *Light and perfections*=Urim and Thummim, Exodus xxviii, 30.
3. In Exodus xxviii, 33–35, the robe of the High Priest is described. On its lower hem it had rows of bells and pomegranates. Herbert refers to Aaron's bell again in DECAY, V, 115, l. 10.
8. *Noise* is again contrasted with music in THE FAMILIE, V, 185, l. 1.
13. *Live*=alive.
19. *Old man.* Colossians iii, 9. Vaughan in his Repentance rewrites thus:

> "Profaneness on my tongue doth rest,
> Defects and darkness in my breast;
> Pollutions all my body wed,
> And even my soul to Thee is dead;
> Only in Him on Whom I feast
> Both soul and body are well drest."

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Onely another head
I have, another heart and breast,
Another musick, making live not dead,
Without whom I could have no rest;
In him I am well drest.

Christ is my onely head,
My alone onely heart and breast,
My onely musick, striking me ev'n dead,
That to the old man I may rest,
And be in him new drest.

So holy in my head,
Perfect and light in my deare breast,
My doctrine tun'd by Christ, (who is not dead,
But lives in me while I do rest,)
Come people! Aaron's drest.

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DATE:

Not found in W. Salisbury Cathedral is noted for the number of its windows, which are said to be as many as the days of the year.

METRE:

Unique.

SUBJECT:

The preacher's heavenly doctrine must shine through his own life before it can affect those who would see God.

NOTES:

2. *Brittle.* So THE PRIESTHOOD, IV, 169, l. 11.

3. Though Herbert often regards man as God's Temple (MAN, IV, 11, l. 1–6; THE CHURCH-FLOORE, V, 167; SION, VI, 25), the word occurs in his poems only here, in THE CHURCH-PORCH, III, 63, l. 423, SION, VI, 25, l. 2, THE CHURCH MILITANT, VI, 135, l. 225, and in the doubtful poem THE CONVERT, VI, 157, l. 18. It occurs again in his letter to his mother (1622), II, 209: *God intends the soul to be as a sacred temple for Himself to dwell in.* And in THE COUNTRY PARSON, XXI, the parson is to *build up this knowledge to a spirituall Temple.*

6. *Anneal.* Glass which has been painted is afterwards fired or annealed in order to fix the color. So LOVE-JOY, V, 163, l. 3.

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THE WINDOWS

LORD, how can man preach thy eternall word?
He is a brittle crazie glasse,
Yet in thy temple thou dost him afford
This glorious and transcendent place
To be a window, through thy grace.

But when thou dost anneal in glasse thy storie,
Making thy life to shine within
The holy Preachers, then the light and glorie
More rev'rend grows, and more doth win;
Which else shows watrish, bleak, and thin.

Doctrine and life, colours and light, in one
When they combine and mingle, bring
A strong regard and aw; but speech alone
Doth vanish like a flaring thing,
And in the eare, not conscience ring.

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INTRODUCTORY:

The true ground of confidence.

DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Of seventeen sonnets, six — like this — are in the Shakespearian form.

SUBJECT:

"It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure:" Philippians ii, 13.

NOTES:

1. *Strict decree*, Matthew v, 48.

6. *Was*, instead of *is*, indicating quotation.

13. 1 Corinthians xv, 22.

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THE HOLDFAST

I THREATNED to observe the strict decree
  Of my deare God with all my power and might.
But I was told by one it could not be,
  Yet I might trust in God to be my light.
Then will I trust, said I, in him alone.
  Nay, ev'n to trust in him was also his;
We must confesse that nothing is our own.
  Then I confesse that he my succour is.
But to have nought is ours, not to confesse
  That we have nought. I stood amaz'd at this,
Much troubled, till I heard a friend expresse
  That all things were more ours by being his.
What Adam had, and forfeited for all,
Christ keepeth now, who cannot fail or fall.

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INTRODUCTORY:

For five other Psalms which are supposed to have been translated by Herbert, see VI, 167–179.

DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Used again in SUBMISSION, V, 205.

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THE 23 PSALME

THE God of love my shepherd is,
And he that doth me feed.
While he is mine and I am his,
What can I want or need?

He leads me to the tender grasse,
Where I both feed and rest,
Then to the streams that gently passe;
In both I have the best.

Or if I stray, he doth convert
And bring my minde in frame.
And all this not for my desert,
But for his holy name.

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15. *Thy rod* is with me.

21–24. In this stanza one sees how sweetly and simply Herbert could write when he designed to do so.

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Yea, in death's shadie black abode
Well may I walk, not fear;
For thou art with me, and thy rod
To guide, thy staffe to bear.

Nay, thou dost make me sit and dine
Ev'n in my enemies' sight.
My head with oyl, my cup with wine
Runnes over day and night.

Surely thy sweet and wondrous love
Shall measure all my dayes;
And as it never shall remove,
So neither shall my praise.

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INTRODUCTORY:

"The same night that he had his Induction he said to Mr. Woodnot: *I have this day taken Jesus to be my Master and Governour; and I am so proud of his service that I will always observe and obey and do his Will, and alwaies call him Jesus my Master:*" Walton's Life. — "To testifie his independencie upon all others, and to quicken his diligence in this kinde, he used in his ordinarie speech, when he made mention of the blessed name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, to adde, *My Master:*" Ferrar, Preface to THE TEMPLE. Cf. also John xiii, 13.

METRE:

Used only here. The first and last line of each stanza rhyme on the same word, thus assisting the suggestion of a pervasive perfume.

DATE:

Not found in W.

SUBJECT:

Love should yield a reciprocal fragrance, both to lover and to loved.

NOTES:

3. Gray amber, a secretion of the spermaceti whale, is found floating in lumps upon the sea, and is much prized in perfumery. Milton refers to it in his "Amber scent of odorous perfume:" Samson Agonistes, l. 720. See, too, Sir T. Browne, Vulgar Errors, Bk. III, ch. xxvi.

6. So THE BANQUET, V, 55, l. 24.

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THE ODOUR

(2 CORINTHIANS II, 15)

How sweetly doth *My Master* sound! *My Master!*
As Amber-greese leaves a rich sent
Unto the taster,
So do these words a sweet content,
An orientall fragrancie, *My Master.*

With these all day I do perfume my minde,
My minde ev'n thrust into them both,
That I might finde
What cordials make this curious broth,
This broth of smells, that feeds and fats my minde.

My Master, shall I speak? O that to thee
My servant were a little so,
As flesh may be,
That these two words might creep and grow
To some degree of spicinesse to thee!

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16. *Pomander* (more fully described in THE BANQUET, V, 55, l. 25=a scent-ball, which when warmed in the hand or crushed (l. 20) yields odor. Shakespeare mentions it among a lady's trinkets; Winter's Tale, iv, 3: "A ribbon, glass, pomander, brooch." And Bacon, Nat. Hist. Cent. 9, among medical appliances: "They have in physick use of pomanders and knots of powders for drying of rheums, comforting of the heat, provoking of sleep, &c." In short, it served the double purpose of the modern smelling-bottle.
17. That fragrance which formerly attended my addresses to thee would now be reflected back from thee, and thus gain a double potency.
22. An uneven line is rare in Herbert.
25. *Breathing*=emission.

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Then should the Pomander, which was before
A speaking sweet, mend by reflection
And tell me more;
For pardon of my imperfection
Would warm and work it sweeter then before.

For when *My Master*, which alone is sweet
And ev'n in my unworthinesse pleasing,
Shall call and meet
My servant, as thee not displeasing,
That call is but the breathing of the sweet.

This breathing would with gains by sweetning me
(As sweet things traffick when they meet)
Return to thee;
And so this new commerce and sweet
Should all my life employ and busie me.

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DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

UNIQUE.

SUBJECT:

A poem is the utterance of feeling; perfect, according to the completeness with which that feeling is expressed.

NOTES:

2. Catches, proverbs, brief phrases saturated with meaning, frequently run in Herbert's mind. So, *My Master*, in THE ODOUR, V, 23; *Less then the least of all thy mercies*, in THE POSIE, V, 29; *Thou shalt answer, Lord, for me*, in THE QUIP, V, 33; *My God and King*, in ANTIPHON, V, 63; *Thou art still my God*, in THE FORERUNNERS, VI, 77.

10. Campion in the Preface to his Divine and Moral Songs (1613) prettily writes: "In these English airs I have chiefly aimed to couple my words and notes lovingly together; which will be much for him to do that hath not power over both."

14. *Behinde*=lacking. So L'ENVOY, VI, 141, l. 16.

15. *In kinde*=according to the true nature of a hymn. Cf. LOVE, III, 85, l. 25, and NATURE, IV, 99, l. 10.

20. Similar cases where feeling may be conceived as interfering with rhyme are the last lines of JORDAN, III, 89; THE SACRIFICE, III, 143, l. 215; DENIALL, IV, 95; GRIEF, VI, 83.

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A TRUE HYMNE

My joy, my life, my crown!
My heart was meaning all the day
Somewhat it fain would say;
And still it runneth mutt'ring up and down
With onely this, *My joy, my life, my crown.*

Yet slight not these few words.
If truly said, they may take part
Among the best in art.
The finenesse which a hymne or psalme affords
Is when the soul unto the lines accords.

He who craves all the minde,
And all the soul, and strength, and time,
If the words onely ryme,
Justly complains that somewhat is behinde
To make his verse, or write a hymne in kinde.

Whereas if th' heart be moved,
Although the verse be somewhat scant,
God doth supplie the want.
As when th' heart sayes (sighing to be approved)
O, could I love! and stops: God writeth, *Loved.*

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INTRODUCTORY:

Posie here means not a bunch of flowers, as in LIFE, VI, 81, l. 1, but a motto, as in MISERIE, IV, 53, l. 69. In this sense *posie* is a shortened form of *poesie*, and is sometimes spelled so by old writers. It is regularly used of inscriptions on glass, and love-verses engraved in rings. I append a few of the latter which I have met in old authors: I seek to be not thine but thee; There is a time; Caught and content; Let us be one till we are none; I would be glad if you I had; Not too fast, but to last; To live in love I love to live; Once mine, always thine; There is no other, and I am he, That loves no other, and thou art she; My joy I do enjoy; Thy death is mine, my life is thine. — Shakespeare uses *posie* in the same sense as Herbert. In The Merchant of Venice, v. 1, Gratiano says he had a ring from his mistress,

> "Whose posy was
> For all the world like cutler's poetry
> Upon a knife, Love me and leave me not."

A notable revival of *posie* in its ancient sense is that of Browning in his Introduction to The Ring and the Book. After stating the facts which give form to the Ring, he writes: "A ring without a posy, and that ring mine?" and so appends the love-verses of the Invocation.

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THE POSIE

Let wits contest,
And with their words and posies windows fill.
Lesse then the least
Of all thy mercies, is my posie still.

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Just before his death, when Herbert sent his poems to Ferrar, he said: *I and this book* (THE TEMPLE) *are less than the least of God's mercies:* Walton's Life. — "We conclude all with his own Motto, with which he used to conclude all things that might seem to tend any way to his honour: *Lesse then the least of God's mercies:*" Ferrar's Preface to THE TEMPLE.

DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Unique.

SUBJECT:

The lover's delight in his own unworthiness.

NOTES:

3. Cf. Genesis xxxii, 10, with Ephesians iii, 8.

9, 10. Cf. the two JORDANS, III, 87 and 91.

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This on my ring,
This by my picture, in my book I write.
Whether I sing,
Or say, or dictate, this is my delight.

Invention rest,
Comparisons go play, wit use thy will.
Lesse then the least
Of all God's mercies, is my posie still.

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INTRODUCTORY:

Quip=quid pro quo, a repartee, retort, or home-thrust (l. 24), as in Shakespeare's "Quip modest," As You Like It, v, 4. So, too, Lyly, Campaspe, III, 2.

"Pa. Why, what's a quip?
"Ma. Wee great girders call it a short saying of a sharpe wit, with a bitter sense in a sweet word."

Vaughan imitates this poem in The Ornament.

DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Used also in THE QUIDDITIE, III, 97.

SUBJECT:

The same that Herbert has often treated in earlier periods of his career,— in THE QUIDDITIE, III, 97; THE WORLD, IV, 21; THE PEARL, IV, 177. He recounts the appeals that Beauty, Pleasure, Ambition, Wit, have made, calling him from that service of God which he still feels to be a sufficient offset to them. "In this time of his decay he would often speak to this purpose: *I now look back upon the pleasures of my life past, and see the content I have taken in beauty, in wit, in musick, and pleasant Conversation, are now all past by me like a dream, or as a shadow that returns not, and are now all become dead to me, or I to them:*" Walton's Life.

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THE QUIP

THE merrie world did on a day
With his train-bands and mates agree
To meet together where I lay,
And all in sport to geere at me.

First, Beautie crept into a rose;
Which when I pluckt not, Sir, said she,
Tell me, I pray, whose hands are those?
But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

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NOTES:

2. *Train-bands*=militia, soldiery; here, organized society.
7. Why do you not clutch at beauty? So, too, in THE COLLAR, V, 213, l. 18.
8. The Prayer-Book version of Psalm xxxviii, 15, reads: "In thee, O Lord, have I put my trust; thou shalt answer for me, O Lord, my God."
9. To Herbert money is not a serious temptation. His most important poem on it is AVARICE, V, 113. He has also a few general precepts about it in THE CHURCH-PORCH, III, 33, 35, l. 151–180, and occasional mention elsewhere.
15. I do not understand this to mean: He granted me only a glimpse; but, He declared that a person of my dull life could only half perceive what glory is.
23. Some late editions print *Thine*, with a capital, as if referring to God, and *I* to man. As printed in ed. 1633, the overwhelming reply to every temptation promising gain is God's voice, saying: "I am thine. What gain is comparable?"

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Then Money came, and chinking still,
What tune is this, poore man? said he,
I heard in Musick you had skill.
But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

Then came brave Glorie puffing by
In silks that whistled, who but he?
He scarce allow'd me half an eie.
But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

Then came quick Wit and Conversation,
And he would needs a comfort be,
And, to be short, make an oration.
But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

Yet when the houre of thy designe
To answer these fine things shall come,
Speak not at large, say, I am thine;
And then they have their answer home.

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DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Unique. Throughout the poem only two rhymes are used, — *mine, thine,* and *more, restore.*

SUBJECT:

"Either was the other's mine." Shakespeare's The Phoenix and the Turtle, l. 36. The subject requires that this poem shall have but two stanzas,—reporting Me and Thee,—that these two shall be fully identical in sense and sound, and only distinguishable through being approached from opposite points of view. This thought of "making two one" (THE SEARCH, V, 223, l. 60) is also found in JUDGEMENT, IV, 67, l. 15; ARTILLERIE, IV, 159, l. 30; THE HOLDFAST, V, 17, l. 12.

NOTES:

1. Song of Solomon ii, 16.

6. *Advantage*=addition, like *with gains,* of THE ODOUR, V, 25, l. 26. Cf. Shakespeare, King John, iii, 3:

> "There is a soul counts thee her creditor,
> And with advantage means to pay thy love."

This line forms the turn in each stanza; cf. l. 16.

7. *Being mine*=a verbal noun, with *this* as its adjective.

13. *Then*=than.

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CLASPING OF HANDS

Lord, thou art mine, and I am thine,
If mine I am; and thine much more
Then I or ought or can be mine.
Yet to be thine doth me restore;
So that again I now am mine,
And with advantage mine the more.
Since this being mine brings with it thine,
And thou with me dost thee restore.
If I without thee would be mine,
I neither should be mine nor thine.

Lord, I am thine, and thou art mine;
So mine thou art that something more
I may presume thee mine then thine.
For thou didst suffer to restore
Not thee, but me, and to be mine,
And with advantage mine the more.
Since thou in death wast none of thine,
Yet then as mine didst me restore.
O be mine still! Still make me thine!
Or rather make no Thine and Mine!

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INTRODUCTORY:

Herbert generally uses Paradise in this sense, referring to a garden, and primarily to the Garden of Eden. The only passages, I believe, in which the word is used in the sense of Heaven, are: SUNDAY, III, 179, l. 56, THE FLOWER, VI, 67, l. 23 and 49, and PERSEVERANCE, VI, 155, l. 10.—THE COUNTRY PARSON (XXXII) is *to dresse and prune them, and take as much joy in a straight-growing childe or servant as a Gardiner doth in a choice tree.*

DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Used also in TRINITIE-SUNDAY, III, 161.

SUBJECT:

The careful pruning of the divine husbandman symbolized by the elimination of letters from a rhyme,—possibly suggested to Herbert by the trimming of trees in the artificial gardens of his time.

NOTES:

2. *Thy trees.* He writes as if he were already a priest. He alludes to the ordering of gardens again in SUNDAY, III, 177, l. 27, and THE FAMILIE, V, 185, l. 12.

10. *Spare* probably means *refrain from*, as in GIDDINESSE, V, 129, l. 12, and elsewhere. The rhyme with *are* occurs in THE BRITISH CHURCH, V, 101, l. 10.

15. *Touch*=attain. So Donne, Forbidding Mourning, l. 36: "And makes me end where I begun."

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PARADISE

I BLESSE thee, Lord, because I GROW
Among thy trees, which in a ROW
To thee both fruit and order OW.

What open force or hidden CHARM
Can blast my fruit, or bring me HARM,
While the inclosure is thine ARM?

Inclose me still for fear I START.
Be to me rather sharp and TART
Then let me want thy hand and ART.

When thou dost greater judgements SPARE,
And with thy knife but prune and PARE,
Ev'n fruitfull trees more fruitfull ARE.

Such sharpnes shows the sweetest FREND,
Such cuttings rather heal then REND,
And such beginnings touch their END.

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DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Unique.

SUBJECT:

Grant — Thou who hast already granted so much — grant rest in thyself and thankfulness.

"Would I could wish my wishes all to rest,
And know to wish the wish that were the best!"
A. H. Clough's Love is Fellow-Service.

NOTES:

2. Notes and Queries for November 2, 1850, quotes Shakespeare, 2 Henry VI, i, 1:

"O Lord, that lends me life,
Lend me a heart replete with thankfulness!"

13–16. A reckoning of what it would come to.

16. And though it is already much, keeps coming for more.

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GRATEFULNESSE

Thou that hast giv'n so much to me,
  Give one thing more, a gratefull heart.
See how thy beggar works on thee
  By art.

He makes thy gifts occasion more,
  And sayes, If he in this be crost,
All thou hast giv'n him heretofore
  Is lost.

But thou didst reckon, when at first
  Thy word our hearts and hands did crave,
What it would come to at the worst
  To save:

Perpetuall knockings at thy doore,
  Tears sullying thy transparent rooms,
Gift upon gift, much would have more,
  And comes.

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17. *Thou wentst on*, so EVEN-SONG, V, 61, l. 17.

19. SION, VI, 25, l. 18.

22. Cf. Donne, A Litanie, xxiii, 1:

> "To Thee
> A sinner is more music when he prays
> Than spheres' or angels' praises be."

27. In UNGRATEFULNESSE, IV, 41, l. 26, we learn that the only thing God demands of us is a grateful heart. This poem shows how even this must be accepted from Him.

30. Days of omission, containing no blessing.

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This notwithstanding, thou wentst on
And didst allow us all our noise.
Nay, thou hast made a sigh and grone
Thy joyes.

Not that thou hast not still above
Much better tunes then grones can make,
But that these countrey-aires thy love
Did take.

Wherefore I crie and crie again,
And in no quiet canst thou be
Till I a thankfull heart obtain
Of thee.

Not thankfull when it pleaseth me,
As if thy blessings had spare dayes,
But such a heart whose pulse may be
Thy praise.

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INTRODUCTORY:

Two other poems with this title are given, III, 95 and IV, 193.

DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Unique.

SUBJECT:

Praise of God for his watchful efficiency.

NOTES:

1. *Mean*=intend, aim at,—so JUSTICE, VI, 13, l. 9.
5. *Wring*. So in LOVE UNKNOWN, V, 179, l. 17.
6. Cf. the refrain of PRAISE, III, 95.
9. Cf. THE ELIXER, III, 99, l. 8.
13. *On*=against, adversely to.
15. Is Herbert here remembering the Chain of Zeus? Homer, Iliad, VIII, 19–27.
17. Exodus xiv, 25.

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PRAISE

LORD, I will mean and speak thy praise,
Thy praise alone.
My busie heart shall spin it all my dayes;
And when it stops for want of store,
Then will I wring it with a sigh or grone,
That thou mayst yet have more.

When thou dost favour any action,
It runnes, it flies;
All things concurre to give it a perfection.
That which had but two legs before,
When thou dost blesse, hath twelve. One wheel doth rise
To twentie then, or more.

But when thou dost on businesse blow,
It hangs, it clogs;
Not all the teams of Albion in a row
Can hale or draw it out of doore.
Legs are but stumps, and Pharaoh's wheels but logs,
And struggling hinders more.

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22. *The sea his shore.* So PROVIDENCE, V, 83, l. 48.
23. *Stint*=bounds, restraint.
24. In a letter thanking King James for his book, he says of him: *O prudentiam incomparabilem, quae eodem vultu et moderatur mundum et nos respicit.*
27. Psalm lvi, 8. Cf. HOPE, V, 203, l. 5.
30. In heaven provision is made for more repentance than I have shown.
33. Old battle-flags hung up within a church.—*Which* refers to *drop*, not to *eye*.
36. Referring back to the *bottle* of l. 27. A little of God's grief over my sin is weightier than all my own.
38. The pressure promised in l. 5.
40. *At use*=usury, interest. Cf. for the thought, OBEDIENCE, IV, 183, l. 42, and AN OFFERING, IV, 189, l. 7–9.

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Thousands of things do thee employ
In ruling all
This spacious globe: Angels must have their joy,
Devils their rod, the sea his shore,
The windes their stint. And yet when I did call,
Thou heardst my call, and more.

I have not lost one single tear.
But when mine eyes
Did weep to heav'n, they found a bottle there
(As we have boxes for the poore)
Readie to take them in; yet of a size
That would contain much more.

But after thou hadst slipt a drop
From thy right eye,
(Which there did hang like streamers neare the top
Of some fair church, to show the sore
And bloudie battell which thou once didst trie)
The glasse was full and more.

Wherefore I sing. Yet since my heart,
Though press'd, runnes thin,
O that I might some other hearts convert,
And so take up at use good store;
That to thy chests there might be coming in
Both all my praise and more!

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DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Used also in the next poem, THE BANQUET.

SUBJECT:

Ho, every one that thirsteth,—whether for food, wine, ease, joy, or love,—come to the banquet and find what will elsewhere be vainly sought. Cf. Isaiah lv, 1.

NOTES:

1. *Taste* = appetite.
4. THE PRIESTHOOD, IV, 171, l. 27.
8. Whose character wine determines,—as winebibbers, drunkards,—with possibly a play upon the word, i. e. it empties of fineness. Cf. Donne, Anatomie of the World, 37: "Her name defined thee, gave thee form and frame." And THE COUNTRY PARSON, XXVI: *One act in these things is bad, but it is the custome and habit that names a glutton.*
15. The same thought in MISERIE, IV, 49, l. 22.
18. *Fright.* The terror one would naturally feel at his sin becoming visible is here felt for sin itself.

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THE INVITATION

Come ye hither all whose taste
Is your waste.
Save your cost and mend your fare.
God is here prepar'd and drest,
And the feast,
God, in whom all dainties are.

Come ye hither all whom wine
Doth define,
Naming you not to your good.
Weep what ye have drunk amisse,
And drink this,
Which before ye drink is bloud.

Come ye hither all whom pain
Doth arraigne,
Bringing all your sinnes to sight.
Taste and fear not. God is here
In this cheer,
And on sinne doth cast the fright.

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23. Such delight as you have known hitherto.
26. Doves draw the celestial car of Venus.
28. This contrast between divine and human love is expounded at length in Two Sonnets, III, 79, and in Love, III, 83.
31. Luke xiv, 13.
36. Where God is, there all people should be.

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Come ye hither all whom joy
Doth destroy,
While ye graze without your bounds.
Here is joy that drowneth quite
Your delight,
As a floud the lower grounds.

Come ye hither all whose love
Is your dove,
And exalts you to the skie.
Here is love which, having breath
Ev'n in death,
After death can never die.

Lord I have invited all,
And I shall
Still invite, still call to thee.
For it seems but just and right
In my sight,
Where is all, there all should be.

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DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Used also in the preceding poem, THE INVITATION.

SUBJECT:

The marvellous delicacy of God's table.

NOTES:

4. *Neatnesse* (cf. MAN, IV, 17, l. 42, and THE FAMILIE, V, 185, l. 8) is Herbert's frequent word for refined beauty. Dr. Willmott well quotes Milton's line in his Sonnet to Mr. Lawrence: "What neat repast shall feast us, light and choice?"

13. *Sweetnesse* here, as usually with Herbert, refers to the smell, not the taste. In five stanzas of the poem it is mentioned.

14. *Made a head.* We say *made headway.* Cf. THE SACRIFICE, III, 123, l. 5.

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THE BANQUET

Welcome sweet and sacred cheer,
Welcome deare!
With me, in me, live and dwell;
For thy neatnesse passeth sight,
Thy delight
Passeth tongue to taste or tell.

O what sweetnesse from the bowl
Fills my soul,
Such as is and makes divine!
Is some starre (fled from the sphere)
Melted there,
As we sugar melt in wine?

Or hath sweetnesse in the bread
Made a head
To subdue the smell of sinne;
Flowers, and gummes, and powders giving
All their living,
Lest the enemie should winne?

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19. The *starre* of the second stanza, the *flower* of the third.
24. So THE ODOUR, V, 23, l. 6.
25. *Pomander*=scent-ball. Cf. THE ODOUR, V, 25, l. 16.
26. *Still*=at all times.
31. Cf. VANITIE, IV, 153, l. 13.
34. *Took bloud*=became man.
35. 2 Samuel xiv, 14.

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Doubtlesse neither starre nor flower
Hath the power
Such a sweetnesse to impart.
Onely God, who gives perfumes,
Flesh assumes,
And with it perfumes my heart.

But as Pomanders and wood
Still are good,
Yet being bruis'd are better sented,
God to show how farre his love
Could improve,
Here, as broken, is presented.

When I had forgot my birth,
And on earth
In delights of earth was drown'd,
God took bloud and needs would be
Spilt with me,
And so found me on the ground.

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41. *Farre from* both the heavenly and the earthly courts.
43. Cf. PRAISE, III, 95, l. 5.
49. The *pitie* God has shown in the Incarnation.
50. My theme, as in THE FOREBUNNERS, VI, 77, l. 11.
51. *Lines and life*=verse and action, repeated in *hands and breath* of l. 53. So, too, THE COLLAR, V, 211, l. 4. *Deed and storie* of COMPLAINING, VI, 27, l. 7, is similar.

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Having rais'd me to look up,
In a cup
Sweetly he doth meet my taste.
But I still being low and short,
Farre from court,
Wine becomes a wing at last.

For with it alone I flie
To the skie;
Where I wipe mine eyes, and see
What I seek, for what I sue,
Him I view
Who hath done so much for me.

Let the wonder of this pitie
Be my dittie,
And take up my lines and life.
Hearken, under pain of death,
Hands and breath,
Strive in this and love the strife.

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DATE:

This poem is not in W., but in place of it appears the poem given, VI, 151.

METRE:

Unique. The stanzas are arranged in pairs, by making the second and eighth lines long.

SUBJECT:

Eyes, light, and power, and the cessation of all three, equally express the love of God. The poem is divided into two parts, by the employment in the fourth and eighth stanzas of a special rhyming system. The first part shows how little I bring to God; the second, how much He brings to me. Is it fanciful to suggest that the first two stanzas of each part discuss *eyes* and *light*; the third *power*?

NOTES:

7. Psalm cxxx, 3. But I am now protected against his gaze.

8. *His sonne.* The double meaning is expanded and discussed in THE SONNE, V, 161.

14. Cf. NATURE, IV, 99, l. 9.

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EVEN-SONG

Blest be the God of love,
Who gave me eyes, and light, and power this day
Both to be busie and to play.
But much more blest be God above

Who gave me sight alone,
Which to himself he did denie;
For when he sees my waies, I dy,
But I have got his sonne, and he hath none.

What have I brought thee home
For this thy love? Have I discharg'd the debt
Which this dayes favour did beget?
I ranne, but all I brought was fome.

Thy diet, care, and cost
Do end in bubbles, balls of winde;
Of winde to thee whom I have crost,
But balls of wilde-fire to my troubled minde.

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17. So GRATEFULNESSE, V, 43, l. 17. Possibly *still* here may have its modern meaning of *notwithstanding*, instead of its usual meaning in Herbert of *always*.
18. Cf. MAN, IV, 17, l. 32.
26. The contrasts of day and night are those of activity and repose.
30. Eludes thy heart's care.
32. *Then*=than. Romans viii, 35.

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Yet still thou goest on,
And now with darknesse closest wearie eyes,
Saying to man, *It doth suffice.*
Henceforth repose. Your work is done.

Thus in thy Ebony box
Thou dost inclose us, till the day
Put our amendment in our way,
And give new wheels to our disorder'd clocks.

I muse which shows more love,
The day or night: that is the gale, this th' harbour;
That is the walk, and this the arbour;
Or that the garden, this the grove.

My God, thou art all love.
Not one poore minute 'scapes thy breast
But brings a favour from above.
And in this love, more then in bed, I rest.

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INTRODUCTORY:

Antiphon is the chant or singing of a choir in church, in which strain answers strain. It is described in CHRISTMAS, III, 169, l. 32. Another poem with this title is given, III, 107.

DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Unique.

SUBJECT:

A call for universal praise, from all above and all below. Psalm cxlviii.

NOTES:

2. Cf. JORDAN, III, 89, l. 15, and THE ELIXER, III, 99, l. 1.

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ANTIPHON

Cho. Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing,
My God and King.

Vers. The heav'ns are not too high,
His praise may thither flie.
The earth is not too low,
His praises there may grow.

Cho. Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing,
My God and King.

Vers. The church with psalms must shout.
No doore can keep them out.
But above all, the heart
Must bear the longest part.

Cho. Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing,
My God and King.

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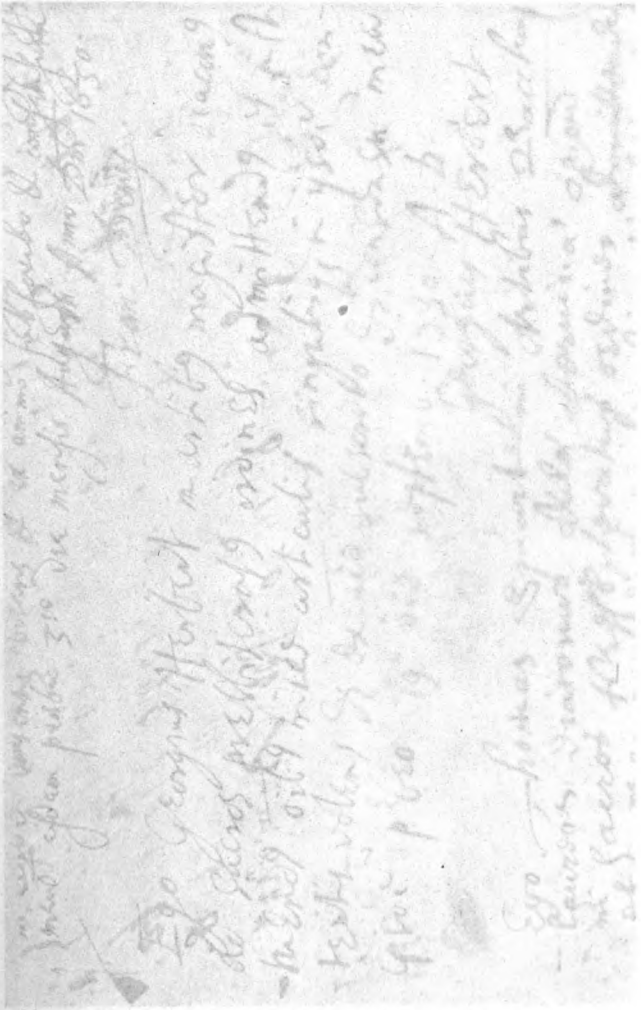

Herbert's subscription at his Ordination, showing also other hand-writing of the time ; from the Record Office, Salisbury.

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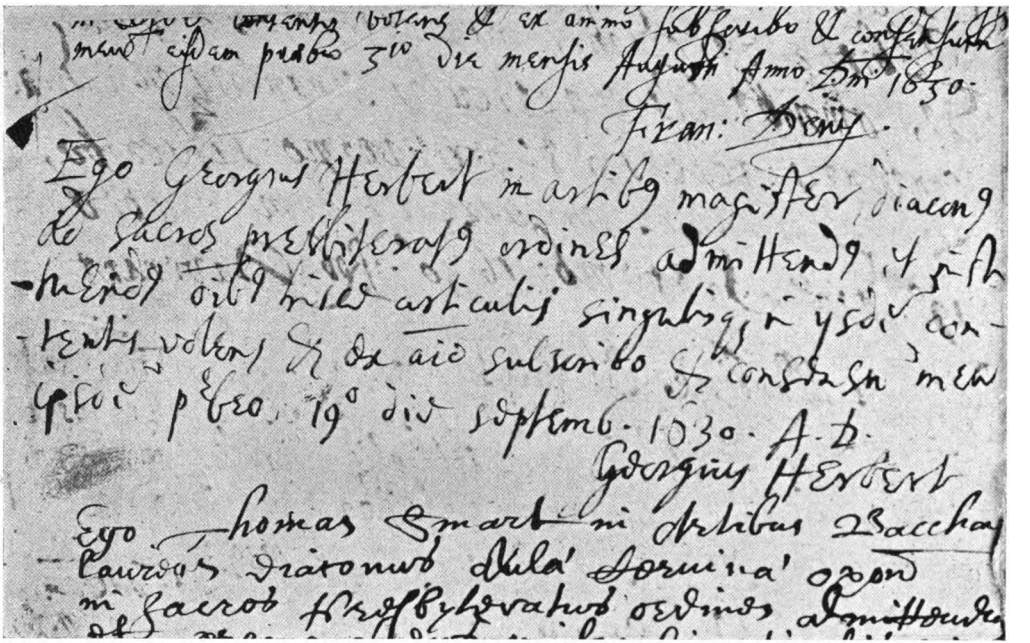

... [illegible] volens & ex animo subscribo & consensum
meum ejdem præbeo 3tio die mensis Augusti Anno Dñi 1830.
Fran: Denny.

Ego Georgius Herbert in artibus magister diaconus
de sacros presbiteratus ordines admittendus, & sin-
gulis ordinibus articulis singulisque in eisdem con-
tentis volens & ex animo subscribo & consensum meum
eisdem præbeo 19° die septemb. 1830. A. D.
Georgius Herbert

Ego Thomas Smart in Artibus Bacchalaureus Diaconus Dñi Episcopi Oxon
ad sacros presbyteratus ordines admittendus

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VIII

BEMERTON STUDY

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PREFACE

MANY persons find the reflective poetry of Herbert the most agreeable portion of THE TEMPLE. The more personal poems call for larger historical and artistic imagination than most of us care to supply. To reconstruct their reality we must project ourselves into conditions of mind which belong to a bygone age; and few are willing, or even able, to detach themselves from their own time and feel the humanity in types of emotion which look fictitious because unfamiliar. Or if we take the very probable view that in these poems, as in Shakespeare's or Sidney's Sonnets, art is as much concerned as emotion, the chance that Herbert's eager songs will be understood becomes more slender still. For art is little known or honored among us. It interests but few to see a feeling taking its rise in some experience of a poet, then purged of whatever checks its coherence, and gradually furnished with all that can lend it fulness and precision, until it finally comes forth palpitating with fresh and irresponsible life, and exhibits with a completeness not otherwise possible an isolated section of the complex soul of man. Indeed, busy and matter-of-fact folk are disposed to suspect falsehood in anything which bears the

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marks of art, and to count only those emotions genuine which are poured out with the spontaneous disorderliness of nature. Where such instinctive presuppositions exist, the subtle adjustments and intricate accords by means of which Herbert idealizes passions which to-day are but slightly felt will to a considerable extent remove his personal poems from sympathy. Work which charms the lover of exquisite art, and beautiful records of earlier habits of mind which fascinate the imaginative student of spiritual history, will be easily discarded as artificial and full of conceits.

But even then the reflective poetry of Herbert remains. Art is not usually felt to be a disturber of meditation, but rather to be required in utterances of profound thought. Herbert's intellectual verse has accordingly been prized by many who have regarded his emotional with something like contempt. I do not myself think the two kinds can be fully parted. Herbert puts passion into everything, and everything he rationalizes. Yet I have thought I might render him more accessible to all tastes if here among the Bemerton poems, as previously among those of the Cambridge years, I place in a special Group those which are least marked by the personal note. Here stand the compact pieces of wisdom which were shaped in the Wiltshire study. Some of them may have been brought over half-finished from Cambridge, Dauntsey, or Baynton. But in Bemerton they received their

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final form, and they appear only in the manuscript of Herbert's later years.

In this more abstract and contemplative species of verse Herbert is able to exhibit with fullest advantage one of his chief literary merits, I mean his power to charge a few common words with more meaning than they easily carry. The phrase strains; the thought obtrudes beyond the words. By audacity of diction Herbert forces his reader — his energetic reader — to approach at some strange angle new aspects of old truths. We all know the aphoristic force of the Elizabethan and Jacobean poets. They were no mere epigrammatists, like the Queen Anne's men. They cared nothing for propriety, and kept their thoughts on things rather than on words. But nobody has ever been able to fashion a phrase with greater certainty that it will stick in the mind which it once enters. In this penetrative power Herbert stands among the foremost of his age. Few poets are more quotable. He abounds in those "jewels five words long which on the stretched forefinger of all time sparkle forever." Yet his sententious power is not satisfied with creating scattered phrases; these are but the material out of which a pathetic, gay, or sagacious whole is firmly fashioned. The general intellectual tone appropriate to each poem is to Herbert's mind a matter of much consequence, and the phrasing which would enter fitly into one is not allowed to disturb the poise of another.

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Let any reader compare PEACE and DOTAGE, CONSTANCIE and THE BAG, or either of these with VANITIE or VERTUE, and he will see how harmoniously selective is Herbert's craftsmanship, how free he is from anything like a single fixed style. All this is less felt because without special training on the reader's part Herbert is difficult to follow. He moves at great speed through strange and tangled regions. He loves "by indirection to find direction out." He does not concern himself with his reader, but with getting his own mind completely delivered.

I have set at the head of this Group Herbert's profoundest philosophic study, PROVIDENCE. The first impression it will give is that it is queer. Certain lines will seem positively comic. I do not think this fact would have disturbed Herbert, or have brought him to admit the need of change, any more than similar facts in the poetry of Wordsworth, Browning, and Emerson ever worried those explorers of the human soul. Such poets write for themselves, and merely allow other men to listen while they think. PROVIDENCE is a masterly survey of a closely ordered universe which culminates in man. While lacking modern scientific equipment, trusting too to Aristotelic methods more than would to-day be generally approved, and consequently often mistaking small things for great, Herbert shows a keenness of observation, an ability to group together similar but outwardly

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unlike facts, and a prevision even of modern evolutional points of view, which prove him to have been a man of real grasp in subjects lying outside his special religious themes. The wording is strong throughout, in parts rising to an easy majesty not reached by him elsewhere.

After PROVIDENCE I place discussions of several features of the Church and its partially detached members, which lead to consideration of the differences between the Biblical Church and our own. CONSTANCIE and THE FOIL show how unshakable a man may become through righteousness; and then his complex and vacillating nature is shown in MAN'S MEDLEY, GIDDINESSE, VANITIE, DOTAGE, BUSINESSE, SINNES ROUND, and THE WATER-COURSE. The pessimistic view of man's condition is a favorite with Herbert both on religious and poetic grounds. It shows the need of Atonement, and lends itself to decidedly picturesque treatment. THE PULLEY and MARIE MAGDALENE point out our way of delivery from restlessness. The Passion of our Lord is set forth in several poems which from style I should suppose to be written early, but which are not included in the Williams Manuscript. At the end of the Group I have placed half-a-dozen trifles in which the fancy of Herbert plays sweetly with its own ingenuities.

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BEMERTON STUDY

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INTRODUCTORY:

These lines, though not originally included in THE TEMPLE, may well find a place here. They were first printed in Walton's Life: "He then proceeded to rebuild the greatest part of the Parsonage-house, which he did also very compleatly, and at his own charge; and having done this good work, he caus'd these Verses to be writ upon or ingraven in, the Mantle of the Chimney in his Hall." If this inscription ever existed at Bemerton, it long ago disappeared. In recent years it has again been inscribed on the side of the Parsonage facing the Church. Thomas Fuller gives a variant of it in his Holy and Profane State, 1642: "A clergyman who built his house from the ground wrote on it this counsel to his successor:

"If thou dost find
An house built to thy mind,
Without thy cost,
Serve thou the more
God and the poor;
My labour is not lost."

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Bemerton Rectory. *See Vol. I, p. 41.*

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TO MY SUCCESSOR

If thou chance for to find
A new House to thy mind,
And built without thy Cost,
Be good to the Poor,
As God gives thee store,
And then my Labour's not lost.

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PROVIDENCE

DATE:

Not found in W. This is the most considerable poem of the Bemerton years, in style far removed from THE CHURCH-PORCH. Possibly it was begun at Cambridge, where MAN was written, but, being reserved for correction and addition, was on this account not included in W. It certainly was finished after Herbert's poetic powers had become fully formed, and was intended, as its closing stanzas indicate, as a kind of climax and epitome of all his thought. Seldom elsewhere does he treat facts in so objective a fashion. PROVIDENCE was translated into Latin in 1678 by William Dillingham.

METRE:

Unique in stanza form. But alternate rhyming pentameters are also used by Herbert in A WREATH, IV, 115, LOVE UNKNOWN, V, 179, and GRIEF, VI, 83. This stanza, the heroic quatrain, first used by Surrey, had been consecrated to philosophical reflection by Sir John Davies in his Nosce Teipsum. It was also used by Sylvester in his Urania, by Southwell in his Vale of Tears, and by Donne in several of his Epistles (among them one to Herbert's mother); subsequently by Beaumont in his Psyche, by Davenant in Gondibert, by Dryden in his Oliver Cromwell and Annus Mirabilis, and by Gray in his Elegy.

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SUBJECT:

"O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all:" Psalm civ, 24. Throughout this poem Herbert has in mind the 104th Psalm, which in King James' Version is entitled, "An exhortation to bless the Lord for his mighty power and wonderful providence." But the Psalm merely sets forth the many marvels of the world; while the poem is a description of a world so ordered by evolutionary plan that the higher grades continually grow out of the lower and bring the significance of these to light. The conception of an organized universe with man as its crown (cf. MAN, IV, 11) was first announced by Aristotle. Herbert may have derived his thought from some such passage as Metaph. XI, 10: "Whatever exists — fish, bird, or plant — has its special place in the scheme of things. There is nothing isolated and unrelated. All have reference to a common unity. While each part has its separate sphere, all also unite and contribute to the good of the whole." The poem has four parts: 1. An Introduction (l. 1–28) on man's supreme and priestly character; after which comes the Psalm itself in two divisions; 2, the first (l. 29–92), celebrating the fulness of God's house; and 3, the second (l. 93–140), pointing out God's *curious art in marshalling his goods*. 4. A conclusion follows (l. 141–152), announcing the obligation and inadequacy of praise.

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NOTES:

1. Wisdom viii, 1. "Attingit a fine usque ad finem fortiter et disponit omnia suaviter." Wisdom reacheth from one end to another mightily; and sweetly doth she order all things.
4. *Do thee right* (one of Herbert's few puns) = do thee justice.
8. Donne had already written (Satire, l. 6): "Here is Nature's Secretary, the philosopher;" and Walton in his Life of Herbert calls Lord Bacon "the great Secretary of Nature." When Sylvester in Urania is urging the poets to write on sacred instead of secular themes, he says that then "all would admire your rymes and do you honour As Secretaries of the Heav'nly Court," l. 185.
9. *Dittie*, — seek to give words to their songs, as in THE SACRIFICE, III, 137, l. 142, and THE FORERUNNERS, VI, 77, l. 11. The thought is repeated in MISERIE, IV, 51, l. 55–60.
12. Psalm cxlv, 10.
13. On the publication of Bacon's Instauratio Magna Herbert addressed him in a Latin poem as *Mundique et animarum Sacerdos unicus.*

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PROVIDENCE

O SACRED Providence, who from end to end
  Strongly and sweetly movest! Shall I write,
And not of thee through whom my fingers bend
  To hold my quill? Shall they not do thee right?

Of all the creatures both in sea and land
  Onely to Man thou hast made known thy wayes,
And put the penne alone into his hand,
  And made him Secretarie of thy praise.

Beasts fain would sing; birds dittie to their notes;
  Trees would be tuning on their native lute
To thy renown; but all their hands and throats
  Are brought to Man, while they are lame and mute.

Man is the world's high Priest. He doth present
  The sacrifice for all; while they below
Unto the service mutter an assent,
  Such as springs use that fall and windes that blow.

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21–24. A tongue exists in you, beasts, that you may eat, in me that I may praise; as your fingers, O trees, can only offer fruit, while mine must write.

27. *Rent*=recompense for use, not merely that derived from lands and houses as with us (cf. CONTENT, IV, 151, l. 28), but here from reason and speech.

31. Repeated from l. 2.

32. So THE CHURCH MILITANT, VI, 119, l. 8.

33–35. In Herbert's mind, there is probably some correspondence between the pair of terms of this stanza, *command* and *permission*, and the pair of the previous one, *power* and *love*. But if so, it is far from clear what the nature of the correspondence is. It is not easy to see how loving permission should operate negatively as a curb, in contrast to the stimulating influence of command. In none of the four poems where *power* and *love* are coupled (PRAYER, III, 185, l. 20; THE TEMPER, IV, 113, l. 27; THE METHOD, V, 197, l. 7; THE CHURCH MILITANT, VI, 119, l. 10) is love represented as either permissive or restrictive. Perhaps this stanza may be explained thus: Action springs either from a sense of duty (divine command) or from natural instincts (permitted by God), which check that sluggishness and waste through indolence which are seldom absent from Herbert's thought of sin. (Cf. THE CHURCH-PORCH, III, 19, l. 38–96, and 55, l. 337–342; EMPLOYMENT, III, 103.)

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He that to praise and laud thee doth refrain
  Doth not refrain unto himself alone,
But robs a thousand who would praise thee fain,
  And doth commit a world of sinne in one.

The beasts say, Eat me; but if beasts must teach,
  The tongue is yours to eat, but mine to praise.
The trees say, Pull me; but the hand you stretch
  Is mine to write, as it is yours to raise.

Wherefore, most sacred Spirit, I here present
  For me and all my fellows praise to thee.
And just it is that I should pay the rent,
  Because the benefit accrues to me.

We all acknowledge both thy power and love
  To be exact, transcendent, and divine;
Who dost so strongly and so sweetly move,
  While all things have their will, yet none but thine.

For either thy *command* or thy *permission*
  Lay hands on all. They are thy *right* and *left*.
The first puts on with speed and expedition,
  The other curbs sinne's stealing pace and theft.

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40. The mention of tuning and tempering in the preceding lines suggests to Herbert how deeply we should be affected if all divine concords could be rendered audible, as in the supposed music of the spheres. (ARTILLERIE, IV, 157, l. 9.)
41–44. Cf. THE CHURCH MILITANT, VI, 119, l. 1–4.
42. *Even*=balanced, constant. An equally unusual use of *uneven* appears in FAITH, IV, 31, l. 32.
45. Psalm lxv, 7.
48. Jeremiah v, 22; Job xxxviii, 11.
49. Psalm civ, 27; MAN, IV, 15, l. 29.
51. The net of the fish is its wide mouth.
53. Nothing comes into the world before its fit food is provided.
56. *Their*, i. e. the creatures of the preceding line.

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Nothing escapes them both. All must appeare,
And be dispos'd, and dress'd, and tun'd by thee,
Who sweetly temper'st all. If we could heare
Thy skill and art, what musick would it be!

Thou art in small things great, not small in any,
Thy even praise can neither rise nor fall.
Thou art in all things one, in each thing many,
For thou art infinite in one and all.

Tempests are calm to thee. They know thy hand,
And hold it fast, as children do their father's,
Which crie and follow. Thou hast made poore sand
Check the proud sea, ev'n when it swells and gathers.

Thy cupboard serves the world. The meat is set
Where all may reach. No beast but knows his feed.
Birds teach us hawking; fishes have their net;
The great prey on the lesse, they on some weed.

Nothing ingendred doth prevent his meat:
Flies have their table spread, ere they appeare;
Some creatures have in winter what to eat,
Others do sleep, and envie not their cheer.

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58. *Twist*=cord. So THE PEARL, IV, 179, l. 38.

61–72. In these three stanzas Herbert traces the economy of the universe, and shows how in each created thing there is a provision for maintaining its type. The old bird helps the young one, and so makes him strong enough to help himself. Nowhere does nature allow real loss, but through some circuitous process what has been spent is eventually restored. Bees draw food from flowers, but without harm to flower, bee, or man. Flowers are consumed by cattle, yet from cattle obtain their needed nutriment. Such nutriment feeds trees, which contribute their leaves to make soil for other trees. Out of the soil streams run into the sea, and from it, by way of the clouds, are themselves renewed. Clouds, produced by the sun's heat, become cooled and descend to form fresh springs. And springs can boil up in obedience to inner heat only when they at the same time send off from their cool upper surface that vapor from which they are ultimately resupplied.

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How finely dost thou times and seasons spin,
And make a twist checker'd with night and day!
Which as it lengthens windes, and windes us in,
As bouls go on, but turning all the way.

Each creature hath a wisdome for his good.
The pigeons feed their tender off-spring, crying,
When they are callow; but withdraw their food
When they are fledge, that need may teach them flying.

Bees work for man; and yet they never bruise
Their master's flower, but leave it, having done,
As fair as ever and as fit to use;
So both the flower doth stay, and hony run.

Sheep eat the grasse and dung the ground for more.
Trees, after bearing, drop their leaves for soil,
Springs vent their streams, and by expense get store.
Clouds cool by heat, and baths by cooling boil.

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75–76. *That*=for expression. Herbert, always longing for larger powers of expression (cf. PRAISE, III, 95, DULNESSE, V, 207, and THE FORERUNNERS, VI, 77), wonders if an herb may not one day be discovered which will quicken speech. The subtle influence of certain herbs over mental conditions was at that time attracting attention. Tobacco and tea had just been introduced, Macbeth already knows "the insane root that takes the reason captive;" and Othello "the poppy and mandragora and all the drowsy syrops of the world."

77–80. Herbert has great interest in the stars, and ever inclines to a belief in astrology. Such passages as THE PEARL, IV, 177, l. 5, THE FOIL, V, 123, and VANITIE, V, 133, l. 7, are frequent; and the three strange poems which are wholly dedicated to the stars — ARTILLERIE, IV, 157, THE STARRE, IV, 161, and THE STORM, VI, 23 — suggest, whatever else, an easy access of celestial influence. The thought of this verse is compressed. A star, like the rose, is beautiful. Perhaps its virtues will eventually be directed, like those of the rose, to our healing. Undoubtedly there is in it abundant power for weal or woe, did we but know how to use it. *Astrology is true, but the astrologist cannot find it:* JACULA PRUDENTUM. On the medicinal powers of the flower, see THE ROSE, IV, 187, l. 18.

83–84. Repeated in AVARICE, V, 113, l. 14.

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Who hath the vertue to expresse the rare
And curious vertues both of herbs and stones?
Is there an herb for that? O that thy care
Would show a root that gives expressions!

And if an herb hath power, what have the starres?
A rose, besides his beautie, is a cure.
Doubtlesse our plagues and plentie, peace and warres
Are there much surer then our art is sure.

Thou hast hid metals. Man may take them thence,
But at his perill. When he digs the place,
He makes a grave; as if the thing had sense,
And threatned man that he should fill the space.

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86. No creature is allowed through want of knowledge to be destroyed by poison or to miss the antidote it needs. With this and with l. 105 compare Herbert's ORATION ON THE RETURN OF CHARLES FROM SPAIN: *Unamquamque regionem suam sibi sufficere, neque externis indigere auxiliis neque antidotis.*

88. *The fear*=the dreaded object.

96. *South*, where cool surfaces are welcome; *North*, where protection is needed against cold.

97. *Good-cheap is dear:* JACULA PRUDENTUM.

100. The harsh but stimulating cold is as needful for man as the easily gathered fruits.

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Ev'n poysons praise thee. Should a thing be lost?
Should creatures want for want of heed their due?
Since where are poysons, antidots are most;
The help stands close and keeps the fear in view.

The sea, which seems to stop the traveller,
Is by a ship the speedier passage made.
The windes, who think they rule the mariner,
Are rul'd by him and taught to serve his trade.

And as thy house is full, so I adore
Thy curious art in marshalling thy goods.
The hills with health abound; the vales with store;
The South with marble; North with furres and woods.

Hard things are glorious; easie things good cheap.
The common all men have; that which is rare
Men therefore seek to have and care to keep.
The healthy frosts with summer-fruits compare.

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102. *Shade*=the shelter formed by overhanging branches.

103–4. *Tall* and *low* are contrasted, the one meaning far from the ground, the other near to it. *Low* is used in the same sense in THE BANQUET, V, 57, l. 40.

104. *Hawks* are mentioned in l. 51, in THE SACRIFICE, III, 131, l. 91, and alluded to in THE PEARL, IV, 179, l. 32. Other sports named by Herbert are bowling, fencing, archery, and cards; but he nowhere mentions ball-play, hunting, or dancing.

112. *In desire*=as much as he needs. Cf. l. 105.

114. *Lay gather'd*, i. e. into lakes and the ocean. — *Broach*=tap, so as to make streams run, as in DIVINITIE, V, 99, l. 9.

118. *Hony drops*=drops which make honey.

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Light without winde is glasse; warm without weight
Is wooll and furres; cool without closenesse, shade;
Speed without pains, a horse; tall without height,
A servile hawk; low without losse, a spade.

All countreys have enough to serve their need.
If they seek fine things, thou dost make them run
For their offence; and then dost turn their speed
To be commerce and trade from sunne to sunne.

Nothing wears clothes but Man; nothing doth need
But he to wear them. Nothing useth fire
But Man alone, to show his heav'nly breed.
And onely he hath fuell in desire.

When th' earth was dry, thou mad'st a sea of wet.
When that lay gather'd, thou didst broach the mountains.
When yet some places could no moisture get,
The windes grew gard'ners, and the clouds good fountains.

Rain, do not hurt my flowers, but gently spend
Your hony drops! Presse not to smell them here.
When they are ripe, their odour will ascend
And at your lodging with their thanks appeare.

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121–124. Good qualities are sometimes divided, as in this stanza; sometimes united, as in the next.

126. *Indian nut*=cocoanut.

127. *Kan*=drinking-cup.

129–132. Besides the medical observations of this verse, others occur in l. 78, 87, 100. For Herbert's general interest in medicine, see his COUNTRY PARSON, XXIII; and for the similar interest of his brother, Lord Herbert, see Autobiography, Lee's ed., p. 52–59.

133. *Leap not:* "Natura non facit saltum." There is no gap in nature or unfilled gradation, all parts are interlinked. This and the following line well sum up the fundamental doctrine of the poem, viz. that creation is ordered, compact, full (l. 93), evolutional, as Aristotle had suggested. So MAN, IV, 13, l. 15; EMPLOYMENT, IV, 145, l. 21; LONGING, VI, 45, l. 53.

135. *Marry*=form a connecting link between.

136. Out of the earth come coal and diamonds, which once were plants. Perhaps there is also allusion to the popular fancy that minerals grow.

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How harsh are thorns to pears! And yet they make
A better hedge, and need less reparation.
How smooth are silks compared with a stake,
Or with a stone! Yet make no good foundation.

Sometimes thou dost divide thy gifts to man,
Sometimes unite. The Indian nut alone
Is clothing, meat and trencher, drink and kan,
Boat, cable, sail and needle, all in one.

Most herbs that grow in brooks are hot and dry.
Cold fruits' warm kernells help against the winde.
The lemmon's juice and rinde cure mutually.
The whey of milk doth loose, the milk doth binde.

Thy creatures leap not, but expresse a feast
Where all the guests sit close, and nothing wants.
Frogs marry fish and flesh; bats, bird and beast;
Sponges, non-sense and sense; mines, th' earth and plants.

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138. Changest thy mode of action. Variation is as important a principle in nature as uniformity.

140. Donne, Progress of the Soul, First Song, 385, says of the elephant:

> "Nature hath given him no knees to bend,
> Himself he up-props, on himself relies,
> Still sleeping stood."

Sir Thomas Browne in his Vulgar Errors, Bk. III, ch. i, examines at length the popular belief that the elephant has no joints in his legs and consequently "sleepeth against a tree."

141. Psalm cvi, 2.

144. *Owes*, for *owns*. But Herbert also uses *own*, THE ELIXER, III, 101, l. 23.

145–152. These last two stanzas are alternative renderings of a single theme, paralleling each other clause by clause. Probably at his death Herbert had not decided which of the two to keep as his ending; but though on the whole preferring l. 145–148, he still wished to preserve in his manuscript l. 149–152 for future estimate. Ferrar, not noticing the duplicate character of the stanzas, printed them both.

148. *Twice*, i. e. *for me and all my fellows*, l. 26. This poem, then, would seem to have been written later than a large body of his verse.

152. *One waye more*, i. e. as *the world's high Priest*, l. 13.

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To show thou art not bound, as if thy lot
Were worse then ours, sometimes thou shiftest hands.
Most things move th' under-jaw; the Crocodile not.
Most things sleep lying; th' Elephant leans or stands.

But who hath praise enough? Nay who hath any?
None can expresse thy works but he that knows them.
And none can know thy works, which are so many
And so complete, but onely he that owes them.

All things that are, though they have sev'rall wayes,
Yet in their being joyn with one advise
To honour thee. And so I give thee praise
In all my other hymnes, but in this twice.

[Each thing that is, although in use and name
It go for one, hath many wayes in store
To honour thee. And so each hymne thy fame
Extolleth many wayes, yet this one more.]

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DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Used also in CHURCH-MUSICK, III, 199, and CONTENT, IV, 149.

SUBJECT:

We may easily be over-curious in theology, where in reality the plain truths are the important ones. Cf. VANITIE, V, 133. This sort of distinction between needless truth and practical truth nowhere appears in THE COUNTRY PARSON, but on the contrary, Ch. V says: *The Countrey Parson hath compiled a book and body of Divinity, which is the storehouse of his Sermons and which he preacheth all his Life.*

NOTES:

1. This stanza well illustrates the kind of intellectual humor of which Herbert is fond (I, 65). Men devise celestial globes to mark the courses of the stars, and books of divinity to mark the ways of God, —fantastic, mechanical representations, harder to comprehend than the realities which they interpret. On the nature of these spheres, see the note on PRAYER, III, 183, l. 9.

8. *Faith* is maimed by the incisiveness of reason.

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DIVINITIE

As men, for fear the starres should sleep and nod
And trip at night, have spheres suppli'd,
As if a starre were duller then a clod,
Which knows his way without a guide;

Just so the other heav'n they also serve,
Divinitie's transcendent skie,
Which with the edge of wit they cut and carve.
Reason triumphs, and faith lies by.

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9. To *broach* is to make an opening in a cask for liquid to run out, as in THE AGONIE, V, 153, l. 15. The blood of Christ's wounded side is mentioned in seven other passages. See THE BAG, V, 157.
11. *Fine*=had it been a fashionably cut garment. "The metaphor was suggested, no doubt, by the quaintly carved, cut, slashed, and paned dresses of Herbert's time:" A. B. Grosart.—*Jag*=to cut into points. We still use it in the adjective *jagged*.
15. *Which onely save*=are the only ones which save.
24. And is not obscure.
25. A term of the Ptolemaic astronomy. Do not keep making finer and finer hypotheses to explain the subtleties of heavenly facts.
26. The *spheres* of l. 2. Save yourself such mental strain, l. 7.
27. The *staffe* may here be the surveyor's staff of THE AGONIE, V, 153, l. 3.

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Could not that wisdome which first broacht the wine
Have thicken'd it with definitions?
And jagg'd his seamlesse coat, had that been fine,
With curious questions and divisions?

But all the doctrine which he taught and gave
Was cleare as heav'n, from whence it came.
At least those beams of truth which onely save
Surpasse in brightnesse any flame.

Love God and love your neighbour. Watch and pray.
Do as ye would be done unto.
O dark instructions! Ev'n as dark as day!
Who can these Gordian knots undo?

But he doth bid us take his bloud for wine.
Bid what he please! Yet I am sure
To take and taste what he doth there designe
Is all that saves, and not obscure.

Then burn thy Epicycles, foolish man.
Break all thy spheres and save thy head.
Faith needs no staffe of flesh, but stoutly can
To heav'n alone both go and leade.

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DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Unique.

SUBJECT:

The English Church, a beautiful mean between the tawdry Romish and barren Presbyterian. So Epigrammata Apologetica, XXVIII. Cf. Donne, Satire III, 43–62.

NOTES:

5. It might be thought that Herbert is here approving the ecclesiastical practice of dating by the Church Year. But all his letters, even those from Bemerton, are dated by the secular month and day.

10. *Outlandish*=foreign and strange, as in FAITH, IV, 29, l. 9, and in the title of JACULA PRUDENTUM, "Outlandish Proverbs."

11. *Painted*=artificial, unreal, as in JORDAN, III, 87, l. 5.

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THE BRITISH CHURCH

I joy, deare Mother, when I view
Thy perfect lineaments, and hue
Both sweet and bright.
Beautie in thee takes up her place,
And dates her letters from thy face
When she doth write.

A fine aspect in fit array,
Neither too mean, nor yet too gay,
Shows who is best.
Outlandish looks may not compare,
For all they either painted are,
Or else undrest.

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14. The Church of Rome, throned on her seven hills, a world-church, was more attractive to ambitious men than the local church of England.

16. Rome has tolerated a sentimental artificiality in so many details of her worship that her whole system of religion has come to seem artificial, her face to be daubed with paint, l. 11.

26. *The mean*=the middle path, Aristotle's μεσότης. Cf. THE COUNTRY PARSON, XIII: *All this he doth not as out of necessity, or as putting a holiness in the things, but as desiring to keep the middle way between superstition and slovenlinesse.*

29. To make thee as secure as a castle with two moats, protected against the twofold dangers of ostentation and disorder. The religious disturbances of his time Herbert discusses also in the next poem, in THE PRIESTHOOD, IV, 171, l. 33, and allegorically in HUMILITIE, IV, 35.

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She on the hills which wantonly
Allureth all, in hope to be
By her preferr'd,
Hath kiss'd so long her painted shrines
That ev'n her face by kissing shines,
For her reward.

She in the valley is so shie
Of dressing that her hair doth lie
About her eares;
While she avoids her neighbour's pride,
She wholly goes on th' other side,
And nothing wears.

But dearest Mother, (what those misse,)
The mean, thy praise and glorie is
And long may be.
Blessed be God, whose love it was
To double-moat thee with his grace,
And none but thee.

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DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Unique.

SUBJECT:

Divisions within the church (*schismes*) are more serious than attacks from without (*rents*).

NOTES:

1. Perhaps he is led to figure the Church, Christ's body, as a rose on account of the Rose of Sharon, (Song of Solomon ii, 1). But quite as likely the rose is employed merely as the object which is fairest; cf. THE ROSE, IV, 187, l. 17.—*Chair*=throne, stately place. So, too, l. 10, and THE TEMPER, IV, 109, l. 9.
2. *Triumph*, accented on the last syllable as in DIVINITIE, V, 97, l. 8.
5. So PEACE, IV, 173, l. 17.
6. Perhaps *bottome* here means not the under part, but the stem. Cf. THE DISCHARGE, V, 191, l. 45.

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CHURCH-RENTS AND SCHISMES

BRAVE rose, (alas!) where art thou? In the chair
  Where thou didst lately so triumph and shine
A worm doth sit, whose many feet and hair
  Are the more foul the more thou wert divine.
This, this hath done it, this did bite the root
  And bottome of the leaves; which when the winde
Did once perceive, it blew them under foot,
  Where rude unhallow'd steps do crush and grinde
Their beauteous glories. Onely shreds of thee,
And those all bitten, in thy chair I see.

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14. Martyrdoms. Foxe's Book of Martyrs was published thirty years before Herbert was born.
17. Cf. THE WORLD, IV, 23, l. 13.
22. *North-winde;* cf. l. 6. The influence of Scotch Presbyterianism was continually increasing in England. Possibly we may find here an allusion to Melville's Anti-Tami-Cami-Categoria, which in early life Herbert had answered (I, 25).
23. *Them=your sev'rall parts* (l. 21).
27. When only this little spot of earth is awake to the Gospel, shall we here be disunited?
29. The thought of these two lines is expanded in GRIEF, VI, 83, l. 1–10.

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Why doth my Mother blush? Is she the rose
And shows it so? Indeed Christ's precious bloud
Gave you a colour once; which when your foes
Thought to let out, the bleeding did you good,
And made you look much fresher then before.
But when debates and fretting jealousies
Did worm and work within you more and more,
Your colour faded, and calamities
Turned your ruddie into pale and bleak.
Your health and beautie both began to break.

Then did your sev'rall parts unloose and start.
Which when your neighbours saw, like a north-winde
They rushed in and cast them in the dirt,
Where Pagans tread. O Mother deare and kinde,
Where shall I get me eyes enough to weep,
As many eyes as starres? Since it is night,
And much of Asia and Europe fast asleep,
And ev'n all Africk. Would at least I might
With these two poore ones lick up all the dew
Which falls by night, and poure it out for you!

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INTRODUCTORY:

Vaughan has enlarged this in his poem, The Jews. There is a curious passage on the Jews in THE COUNTRY PARSON, XXXIV.

DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Unique, but differs only in rhyming system from JUSTICE, VI, 13.

SUBJECT:

Christianity grafted upon Judaism has absorbed the vitality of the Jews, and should now repay. Cf. Romans xi, 17–21.

NOTES:

2. *Cyens*=scions, grafts.
3. By Apostolic succession. Cf. WHITSUNDAY, III, 159, l. 17.
6. By keeping the letter, they lose it.
8. Revelation viii, 6.
12. Job xiv, 9.

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THE JEWS

Poore nation, whose sweet sap and juice
Our cyens have purloin'd, and left you drie;
Whose streams we got by the Apostles' sluce
And use in baptisme, while ye pine and die;
Who, by not keeping once, became a debter,
And now by keeping lose the letter;

Oh that my prayers! mine, alas!
Oh that some Angel might a trumpet sound,
At which the Church falling upon her face
Should crie so loud untill the trump were drown'd,
And by that crie of her deare Lord obtain
That your sweet sap might come again!

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DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Unique.

SUBJECT:

The preferring of Barabbas (popularity with the multitude), or of Judas (gold), to Christ has not ceased in our day.

NOTES:

6. *That choice*=the choosing of Barabbas. *Thy storie*=the description of you. *Storie* is used five times by Herbert in this sense, and also rhyming with *glorie:* THE CHURCH-PORCH, III, 21, l. 52, and 25, l. 94, COMPLAINING, VI, 27, l. 7, and A DIALOGUE-ANTHEME, VI, 103, l. 3. Cf., too, Crashaw's Wishes to his Supposed Mistress: "Be you my fictions, but her story."
10. John viii, 44.
12. *Her* where we should use *its*, which was hardly established in Herbert's time.
18. So Vaughan in his Rules and Lessons, p. 45: "Who sells Religion is a Judas-Jew." In THE COUNTRY PARSON, II, Herbert writes: *They who for the hope of promotion neglect any necessary admonition or reproofe, sell (with Judas) their Lord and Master.*
19. *Prevent*=anticipate. 1 Corinthians xi, 31.
20. *That light*=conscience, Proverbs xx, 27; John i, 9.

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SELF-CONDEMNATION

Thou who condemnest Jewish hate
For choosing Barabbas, a murderer,
Before the Lord of glorie,
Look back upon thine own estate,
Call home thine eye (that busie wanderer),
That choice may be thy storie.

He that doth love, and love amisse,
This world's delights before true Christian joy,
Hath made a Jewish choice.
The world an ancient murderer is;
Thousands of souls it hath, and doth destroy
With her enchanting voice.

He that hath made a sorrie wedding
Between his soul and gold, and hath preferr'd
False gain before the true,
Hath done what he condemnes in reading;
For he hath sold for money his deare Lord,
And is a Judas-Jew.

Thus we prevent the last great day,
And judge our selves. That light which sin and passion
Did before dimme and choke,
When once those snuffes are ta'ne away,
Shines bright and cleare, ev'n unto condemnation,
Without excuse or cloke.

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DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Of seventeen sonnets, six — like this — are in the Shakespearian form.

SUBJECT:

Money, though created by man, has become his master.

NOTES:

1. 1 Timothy vi, 10.

9. *Forcing;* cf. THE PEARL, IV, 177, l. 6.

10. *The face of man*=the king's head on the coin.

14. So, too, PROVIDENCE, V, 87, l. 82–84.

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AVARICE

MONEY, thou bane of blisse and sourse of wo,
  Whence com'st thou that thou art so fresh and fine?
I know thy parentage is base and low,
  Man found thee poore and dirtie in a mine.
Surely thou didst so little contribute
  To this great kingdome which thou now hast got
That he was fain, when thou wert destitute,
  To digge thee out of thy dark cave and grot.
Then forcing thee by fire, he made thee bright.
  Nay, thou hast got the face of man, for we
Have with our stamp and seal transferr'd our right;
  Thou art the man, and man but drosse to thee.
Man calleth thee his wealth, who made thee rich,
And while he digs out thee, falls in the ditch.

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DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Unique, but differs only in rhyming system from JORDAN, III, 87.

SUBJECT:

Throughout recorded history the field of intercourse between God and man has steadily narrowed. Cf. WHITSUNDAY, III, 157.

NOTES:

1–3. Genesis xix, 3; xxxii, 24; xviii, 33; Judges vi, 11.

4. To-day God silently endures human complaints; with Moses He was so intimate that He could speak and check them. Exodus xxxii, 14.

5. Exodus xxxii, 10.

7. Judges vi, 11; Exodus iii, 2; 1 Kings xix, 9; Genesis xxiv, 11.

9. Exodus xix, 20.

10. Exodus xxviii, 33–35. Cf. AARON, V, 11, l. 3.

12. Luke xvii, 21.

13. *Sinne*=original sin; *Satan* may refer to present ill-doing. Cf. SELF-CONDEMNATION, V, 111, l. 20.

15. The portion left by Sin and Satan, who are here figured as independent.

16. *Whenas*=since thy love — once widespread, but now forced back by sin — keeps itself hidden, awaiting the flames of the judgment day.

18. *Closet up itself*. Cf. WHITSUNDAY, III, 159, l. 21.

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DECAY

Sweet were the dayes when thou didst lodge with
Lot,
Struggle with Jacob, sit with Gideon,
Advise with Abraham, when thy power could not
Encounter Moses' strong complaints and mone.
Thy words were then, *Let me alone.*

One might have sought and found thee presently
At some fair oak, or bush, or cave, or well.
Is my God this way? No, they would reply,
He is to Sinai gone as we heard tell.
List, ye may heare great Aaron's bell.

But now thou dost thy self immure and close
In some one corner of a feeble heart,
Where yet both Sinne and Satan, thy old foes,
Do pinch and straiten thee and use much art
To gain thy thirds and little part.

I see the world grows old, whenas the heat
Of thy great love once spread, as in an urn
Doth closet up itself and still retreat,
Cold sinne still forcing it, till it return,
And calling Justice, all things burn.

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INTRODUCTORY:

Another poem with this title is given, VI, 13. This much resembles DEATH, IV, 59.

DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Unique.

SUBJECT:

The justice of God, as revealed by Christ, is friendly, not hostile.

NOTES:

5. *Discolour*=take away the living color, make thee ghastly. The word is used again in AFFLICTION, VI, 29, l. 10.

7. *The dishes* are the pans of the scales of justice. The *beam* is the cross-piece from which the dishes hang; the *scape*, the upright part at right angles with the beam.

10. *Tort'ring*, thus spelled in ed. 1633, meaning *torturing*, has often been erroneously printed *tottering*.

13. 2 Corinthians iii, 14.—*Pure*=transparent.

19, 21. The emphatic words are *me* and *thee*.

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JUSTICE

O DREADFULL Justice, what a fright and terrour
Wast thou of old,
When sinne and errour
Did show and shape thy looks to me,
And through their glasse discolour thee!
He that did but look up was proud and bold.

The dishes of thy ballance seem'd to gape,
Like two great pits.
The beam and scape
Did like some tort'ring engine show.
Thy hand above did burn and glow,
Danting the stoutest hearts, the proudest wits.

But now that Christ's pure vail presents the sight,
I see no fears.
Thy hand is white,
Thy scales like buckets, which attend
And interchangeably descend,
Lifting to heaven from this well of tears.

For where before thou still didst call on me,
Now I still touch
And harp on thee.
God's promises have made thee mine.
Why should I justice now decline?
Against me there is none, but for me much.

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INTRODUCTORY:

Several writers of Herbert's time — N. Breton, Chapman, J. Earle, Bishop Hall, Sir T. Overbury, and, in modified form, Sir J. Davies — had made elaborate studies of single human traits, much in the manner of Theophrastus in his Characters. This poem, so unlike Herbert's other work, is an experiment in following the current fashion. Vaughan imitates it in his Righteousness. The Standard of Equality, by Philo-Decaeus, was dedicated in 1647 to Sir John Danvers, the stepfather of Herbert, in these words: "Lighting casually on the poems of Mr. George Herbert, lately deceased, (whose pious life and death have converted me to a full belief that there is a St. George,) and therein perusing the description of a constant man, it directed my thoughts unto yourself; having heard that the author in his lifetime had therein designed no other title than your character in that description." These are the words of a flattering dedicator. Few persons could be found less like Herbert's Constant Man than Sir John Danvers. See I, 24.

DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Unique.

SUBJECT:

The sturdy righteousness which is not prompted or checked by expediency. Perhaps he has in mind the 101st Psalm, which in THE COUNTRY PARSON,

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CONSTANCIE

Who is the honest man?
He that doth still and strongly good pursue,
To God, his neighbour, and himself most true.
Whom neither force nor fawning can
Unpinne or wrench from giving all their due.

Whose honestie is not
So loose or easie that a ruffling winde
Can blow away, or glittering look it blinde.
Who rides his sure and even trot
While the world now rides by, now lags behinde.

Who, when great trials come,
Nor seeks nor shunnes them; but doth calmly stay
Till he the thing and the example weigh.
All being brought into a summe,
What place or person calls for, he doth pay.

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X, he advises should be *expressed in a fayre table as being the rule of a family*, and hung upon the wall.

NOTES:

1. Cf. Psalm xv, and Horace's Integer Vitae. A vigorous paraphrase of the latter had just appeared in Campion's The Man of Life Upright. The virtue of *Constancie* was a favorite one with Herbert; cf. THE CHURCH-PORCH, III, 27, l. 115–120.
6. Vaughan has paraphrased this stanza in his Rules and Lessons, stanza ix.
8. *Glittering look*, a dazzling glance of the great cannot make the honest man shut his eyes to iniquity.
13. *The thing and the example*=the principle and its special application.
20. Cf. Donne, Letter to Lady Carey, l. 34. The three words in Herbert's stanza which formerly rhymed are now all pronounced differently.
24. Others do right so long as eyes can see them. He regards only Virtue's all-observing eye.
26–30. *I forget all things so I may do them good who want it. So I do my part to them, let them think of me what they will or can. If I should regard such things, it were in another's power to defeat my charity, and evil should be stronger than good:* Herbert's letter to his brother Henry, 1630.
31. When the world's game runs counter to his righteous purposes (cf. AFFLICTION, IV, 141, l. 53), nothing can induce him to distort his movements away from his purpose into conformity with evil.

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Whom none can work or wooe
To use in any thing a trick or sleight,
For above all things he abhorres deceit.
His words and works and fashion too
All of a piece, and all are cleare and straight.

Who never melts or thaws
At close tentations. When the day is done,
His goodnesse sets not, but in dark can runne.
The sunne to others writeth laws,
And is their vertue. Vertue is his Sunne.

Who, when he is to treat
With sick folks, women, those whom passions sway,
Allows for that and keeps his constant way.
Whom others' faults do not defeat;
But though men fail him, yet his part doth play.

Whom nothing can procure,
When the wide world runnes bias, from his will
To writhe his limbes, and share, not mend the ill.
This is the Mark-man, safe and sure,
Who still is right, and prayes to be so still.

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INTRODUCTORY:

A foil is a piece of metal employed as a setting for a jewel, in order to give it richer color. Cf. To the Queene of Bohemia, VI, 185, l. 16. So Shakespeare, Lover's Complaint, l. 153:

> "Which remain'd the foil
> Of this false jewel, and his amorous spoil."

DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Unique.

SUBJECT:

Grief brings out the nature of sin as heaven does that of virtue.

NOTES:

1. If we below could see.
8. *Grief*. Is this possibly a misprint for *sin*? In l. 6 *vertues* and *sinning* are parallel. The sense seems to require that they should be so here.

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THE FOIL

If we could see below
The sphere of vertue and each shining grace
As plainly as that above doth show,
This were the better skie, the brighter place.

God hath made starres the foil
To set off vertues, griefs to set off sinning.
Yet in this wretched world we toil
As if grief were not foul, nor vertue winning.

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INTRODUCTORY:

Translated into Latin in 1678 by William Dillingham, with the title GAUDIUM.

DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Unique.

SUBJECT:

"Man has double joys and sorrows, answering to his double nature; but the soul's joys are to be preferred, as lasting into the world beyond:" H. C. Beeching.

NOTES:

8. *Make their pretence*=lay hold upon. See JORDAN, III, 93, l. 16.

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MAN'S MEDLEY

Heark, how the birds do sing,
And woods do ring!
All creatures have their joy, and man hath his.
Yet if we rightly measure,
Man's joy and pleasure
Rather hereafter then in present is.

To this life things of sense
Make their pretence;
In th' other Angels have a right by birth.
Man ties them both alone,
And makes them one,
With th' one hand touching heav'n, with th' other earth.

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15. A dark passage, the difficulties mainly connecting themselves with the significance of *lace*, the meaning of *after*, and the subject of *should*. The *curious lace* may represent that beauty (cf. PEACE, IV, 173, l. 9; THE PEARL, IV, 177, l. 16) which, everywhere fringing physical objects, seems never really to belong to them. Still further along in the spiritual direction, next after this beautiful trimming, — rather than after, or in accordance with, his material stuff, — man (*he* of l. 15) should take his place or get his significance. So interpreted, the passage would be a characteristic bit of Herbert's Platonism. But the sense of *after* is severely strained. In EMPLOYMENT, IV, 143, l. 12, the stuff or material of our life is said to be with God.

30. Herbert uses the same rhyme in the second stanza, and often elsewhere. Throughout the seventeenth century the word *one* was pronounced not like our *won*, but like our *own;* as we still pronounce it in *alone*, and sometimes in *none* and *only*. See SEPULCHRE, V, 155, l. 3.

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In soul he mounts and flies,
In flesh he dies.
He wears a stuffe whose thread is coarse and round,
But trimm'd with curious lace,
And should take place
After the trimming, not the stuffe and ground.

Not that he may not here
Taste of the cheer;
But as birds drink and straight lift up their head,
So must he sip and think
Of better drink
He may attain to after he is dead.

But as his joyes are double,
So is his trouble.
He hath two winters, other things but one.
Both frosts and thoughts do nip
And bite his lip,
And he of all things fears two deaths alone.

Yet ev'n the greatest griefs
May be reliefs,
Could he but take them right and in their wayes.
Happie is he whose heart
Hath found the art
To turn his double pains to double praise.

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DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Used also in DULNESSE, V, 207.

SUBJECT:

"Unite my heart to fear thy name:" Psalm lxxxvi, 11. There is likeness of thought between this poem and MISERIE, IV, 47, where man's wretchedness is attributed to his instability.

NOTES:

11. *Snudge*=to lie snug, to sleep. So Vaughan understands it in his Misery, l. 65:

> "The age, the present times, are not
> To snudge in and embrace a cot."

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GIDDINESSE

Oh, what a thing is man! How farre from power,
From setled peace and rest!
He is some twentie sev'rall men at least
Each sev'rall houre.

One while he counts of heav'n as of his treasure;
But then a thought creeps in
And calls him coward who for fear of sinne
Will lose a pleasure.

Now he will fight it out and to the warres;
Now eat his bread in peace
And snudge in quiet. Now he scorns increase;
Now all day spares.

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12. *Spares*=saves his money, is sparing, — its usual meaning in Herbert. *Spare* in its other sense — to part with — occurs in Herbert only rarely. MORTIFICATION, IV, 57, l. 34.

15. It is partly true that a whirlwind blows, for his mind is like a whirlwind.

17. Cf. THE CHURCH-PORCH, III, 17, l. 23.

19. In dying the dolphin takes on a variety of colors, which Herbert attributes to its changing feelings. So Byron, Childe Harold, IV, stanza xxix:

> "Parting day
> Dies like the dolphin, whom each pang imbues
> With a new colour as it gasps away."

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He builds a house, which quickly down must go,
As if a whirlwinde blew
And crusht the building; and it's partly true,
His minde is so.

O what a sight were Man if his attires
Did alter with his minde;
And like a Dolphin's skinne, his clothes combin'd
With his desires!

Surely if each one saw another's heart,
There would be no commerce,
No sale or bargain passe. All would disperse,
And live apart.

Lord, mend or rather make us. One creation
Will not suffice our turn.
Except thou make us dayly, we shall spurn
Our own salvation.

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INTRODUCTORY:

Another poem with this title is given, IV, 153.

DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Unique.

SUBJECT:

Man's zeal and success in pursuing things remote and unimportant. Cf. DIVINITIE, V, 97.

NOTES:

1. For the appropriateness of these words *bore* and *thred* see note on PRAYER, III, 183, l. 9.
3. Cf. THE AGONIE, V, 153, l. 3.
7. "*Aspects*=the appearance of the planets in their relation to each other, and therefore in their supposed influence on earthly matters:" A. R. Waller.—*Full-ey'd* is used again in THE GLANCE, VI, 91, l. 20.
14. A similar thought appears in PROVIDENCE, V, 87, l. 81.

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VANITIE

The fleet Astronomer can bore
And thred the spheres with his quick-piercing minde.
He views their stations, walks from doore to doore,
Surveys as if he had design'd
To make a purchase there. He sees their dances,
And knoweth long before
Both their full-ey'd aspects and secret glances.

The nimble Diver with his side
Cuts through the working waves, that he may fetch
His dearely-earned pearl, which God did hide
On purpose from the ventrous wretch;
That he might save his life, and also hers
Who with excessive pride
Her own destruction and his danger wears.

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15. From any created object the chemist can strip the outward traits, and by analysis lay bare the ultimate elements, studying these in their detachment instead of in those composite forms in which they usually present themselves to our senses.
17. *Callow*=unfledged. PROVIDENCE, V, 85, l. 63.
23. So in THE CHURCH-PORCH, III, 15, l. 9, we read of God's lesson written in the soul. Jeremiah xxxi, 33.
26. Romans x, 6–8.

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The subtil Chymick can devest
And strip the creature naked, till he finde
The callow principles within their nest.
There he imparts to them his minde,
Admitted to their bed-chamber, before
They appeare trim and drest
To ordinarie suitours at the doore.

What hath not man sought out and found,
But his deare God? Who yet his glorious law
Embosomes in us, mellowing the ground
With showres and frosts, with love and aw,
So that we need not say, Where's this command?
Poore man, thou searchest round
To finde out *death*, but missest *life* at hand.

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DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Unique, but differs only in rhyming system from THE PRIESTHOOD, IV, 169.

SUBJECT:

Doting man mistakes nothing for something.

NOTES:

1. *Glozing*=flatteringly deceptive. So Milton, Paradise Lost, III, 93: "Man will hearken to his glozing lies." — *Casks*=empty barrels. Dr. Grosart proposes the emendation *husks* to correspond with *rooted miseries* in the next stanza.
2. *Night-fires*=ignes fatui, will-o'-the-wisps.
3. *Chases in Arras*=hunting-parties in silk, instead of in flesh and bone,—contrasted with the *surefooted griefs* of l. 9.
4. *Career*=full tilt, as in JOSEPH'S COAT, VI, 61, l. 6.
5. In VANITIE, IV, 153, l. 4, *solid work* is contrasted with *false embroyderies*. There is a Spanish proverb: "Nada entre duos platos."
7. Same phrase in OBEDIENCE, IV, 183, l. 28.
8. *In grain*=going through and through.—*Ripe and blown*=in full flower.
14. In THE COUNTRY PARSON, XV, Herbert speaks of *the miserable comparison of the moment of griefs here with the weight of joyes hereafter*.

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DOTAGE

False glozing pleasures, casks of happinesse,
  Foolish night-fires, women's and children's wishes,
Chases in Arras, guilded emptinesse,
Shadows well mounted, dreams in a career,
  Embroider'd lyes, nothing between two dishes;
    These are the pleasures here.

True earnest sorrows, rooted miseries,
  Anguish in grain, vexations ripe and blown,
Sure-footed griefs, solid calamities,
Plain demonstrations, evident and cleare,
  Fetching their proofs ev'n from the very bone;
    These are the sorrows here.

But oh the folly of distracted men,
  Who griefs in earnest, joyes in jest pursue;
Preferring, like brute beasts, a lothsome den
Before a court, ev'n that above so cleare,
  Where are no sorrows, but delights more true
    Then miseries are here!

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DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

The couplets are like those of ANTIPHON, III, 107. The triplets are unique. The rhyming vowel at the beginning and near the end is *a*. All the other rhymes are in *e* or *o*.

SUBJECT:

After sinning, there is only one business,—energetic repentance. Lines 3–14 (the human side of sin) correspond with lines 17–28 (the divine side).

NOTES:

1. *Idle* here and in l. 15=indifferent, doing nothing about it, the quality described at length in MISERIE, IV, 47.
3. Elsewhere waters know their work and seek their end. How is it with the waters of the eye?
8. The man of faults and fears will need tears.
9. *Plot:* it is their plan or scheme to be never at rest.
14. If you will not put yourself to the slight pain of repentance, it is a pity you have a body in which pungent effects of sin must be recorded. These lines correspond with l. 7 and 8.

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BUSINESSE

CANST be idle? Canst thou play,
Foolish soul, who sinn'd to day?

Rivers run, and springs each one
Know their home, and get them gone.
Hast thou tears, or hast thou none?

If, poore soul, thou hast no tears,
Would thou hadst no faults or fears!
Who hath these, those ill forbears.

Windes still work; it is their plot,
Be the season cold or hot.
Hast thou sighs, or hast thou not?

If thou hast no sighs or grones,
Would thou hadst no flesh and bones!
Lesser pains scape greater ones.

But if yet thou idle be,
Foolish soul, who di'd for thee?

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22. The death of the body and of the soul. Revelation xxi, 8. Cf. MAN'S MEDLEY, V, 127, l. 30.
24. Everything in this poem is antithetic: *rivers* and *tears* are offset against *windes* and *sighs;* Christ's *life* against his *death;* our *losing gold* against our *finding silver;* and all in illustration of the great antithesis of sin and salvation.
28. The present life, and the life of misery hereafter.
29. Can man properly take time to breathe between committing sin and accepting the new life offered by Christ's death?
32. *His crosse*=his affliction.
33. Shall he not tell his Lord of his loss?

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Who did leave his Father's throne
To assume thy flesh and bone?
Had he life, or had he none?

If he had not liv'd for thee,
Thou hadst di'd most wretchedly,
And two deaths had been thy fee.

He so farre thy good did plot
That his own self he forgot.
Did he die, or did he not?

If he had not di'd for thee,
Thou hadst liv'd in miserie.
Two lives worse then ten deaths be.

And hath any space of breath
'Twixt his sinnes and Saviour's death?

He that loseth gold, though drosse,
Tells to all he meets his crosse.
He that sinnes, hath he no losse?

He that findes a silver vein
Thinks on it, and thinks again.
Brings thy Saviour's death no gain?

Who in heart not ever kneels
Neither sinne nor Saviour feels.

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DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

The same as that of THE CHURCH-PORCH, except that this is a case of "link-verse," i. e. the last line of each stanza is the first line of the next, and the last line of the poem connects with the first. This structure, which at first seems merely ingenious, really expresses as no other could the self-perpetuating character of sin. *Such beginnings touch their end.* — Southwell in his St. Peter's Complaint, stanza cxiii (1595), has this stanza:

"My eye reades mournfull lessons to my hart,
My hart doth to my thought the greefes expound,
My thought the same doth to my tongue impart,
My tongue the message in the eares doth sound;
My eares back to my hart their sorrowes send;
Thus circling greefes runne round without an end."

And Donne had already employed the device, though with far less delicacy and appropriateness, in his Corona or circlet of Divine Sonnets, where the last line of each is repeated as the first line of the next, and the last line of the seventh sonnet is the first line of the first. Several of Daniel's sonnets are similarly linked. In the following poem Herbert uses this metre with another fanciful modification of the last line.

SUBJECT:

Admit the beginnings of sin, and evil thoughts, words, and deeds follow in a never-ending round.

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SINNES ROUND

Sorrie I am, my God, sorrie I am
That my offences course it in a ring.
My thoughts are working like a busie flame
Untill their cockatrice they hatch and bring.
And when they once have perfected their draughts,
My words take fire from my inflamed thoughts.

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NOTES:

4. For ancient beliefs about this fabulous monster, see Isaiah lix, 5, and xiv, 29. For both ancient and modern beliefs that "he proceedeth from a cock's egg, hatched under a toad or serpent, killeth at a distance and poisoneth by the eye," see Sir T. Browne's Vulgar Errors, III, 7. Spenser has him in The Amoretti, XLIX: "Kill with looks as cockatrices do."
8. Mount Aetna.
9. This rhyme occurs in three other poems.
10. To bring evil out into the air kindles its flame anew. Cf. THE ODOUR, V, 25, l. 25.
12. So JACULA PRUDENTUM: *Sins are not known till they be acted.*
15. Genesis xi, 4.
17. The same sinful sequence appears in MARIE MAGDALENE, V, 151, l. 12.

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My words take fire from my inflamed thoughts,
  Which spit it forth like the Sicilian hill.
They vent the wares and passe them with their faults,
  And by their breathing ventilate the ill.
But words suffice not where are lewd intentions;
My hands do joyn to finish the inventions.

My hands do joyn to finish the inventions.
  And so my sinnes ascend three stories high,
As Babel grew before there were dissentions.
  Yet ill deeds loyter not, for they supplie
New thoughts of sinning. Wherefore, to my shame,
Sorrie I am, my God, sorrie I am.

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INTRODUCTORY:

Dualism is deep in Herbert. His universe presents itself in antithetic pairs. Man and God, nature and spirit, pleasure and duty, death and life,—to these irreconcilable opposites his thought continually recurs. Between them he recognizes no inner kinship, as do Vaughan, Crashaw, and the Mystics. For him approach to the one is ever denial of the other. This pessimistic little poem, with its two stanzas and contrasted endings, is an extreme exhibit of his temper.

DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

A special adaptation of the metre of THE CHURCH-PORCH, III, 15, and SINNES ROUND, V, 143.

SUBJECT:

What befits affliction is not complaint, but repentance.

NOTES:

6. Water pipes are mentioned also in WHITSUNDAY, III, 159, l. 17.

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THE WATER-COURSE

THOU who dost dwell and linger here below,
  Since the condition of this world is frail
Where of all plants afflictions soonest grow,
  If troubles overtake thee, do not wail;
For who can look for lesse that loveth { Life. / Strife.

But rather turn the pipe and water's course
  To serve thy sinnes, and furnish thee with store
Of sov'raigne tears, springing from true remorse;
  That so in purenesse thou mayst him adore
Who gives to man as he sees fit { Salvation. / Damnation.

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INTRODUCTORY:

God's means of drawing us to himself. J. Churton Collins writes in his Treasury of Minor British Poetry: "This is the one poem of Herbert's which is not marred by his characteristic defects, affected quaintness, extravagance, prosaic baldness, and discordant rhythm." I cannot agree with this estimate. The poetry of Herbert does not seem to me in general to be marked with these characteristics, nor the present poem to be singularly free from them.

DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Unique.

SUBJECT:

"Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it finds rest in Thee;" Augustine, Confessions, I, 1.

NOTES:

7. These good gifts to man are often referred to by Herbert under slightly varying names: as in THE WORLD, IV, 21; THE PEARL, IV, 177; THE QUIP, V, 33.

16, 17. *Rest, restlessnesse.* There are not above half-a-dozen puns in Herbert. Few poets of his day are so free from them.

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THE PULLEY

When God at first made man,
Having a glasse of blessings standing by,
Let us (said he) poure on him all we can.
Let the world's riches, which dispersed lie,
Contract into a span.

So strength first made a way,
Then beautie flow'd, then wisdome, honour, pleasure.
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that alone of all his treasure
Rest in the bottome lay.

For if I should (said he)
Bestow this jewell also on my creature,
He would adore my gifts instead of me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature.
So both should losers be.

Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlesnesse.
Let him be rich and wearie, that at least,
If goodnesse leade him not, yet wearinesse
May tosse him to my breast.

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DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Unique. Rhyming system same as CHURCH-MONUMENTS, III, 201.

SUBJECT:

The sinner must share, at least by tears, in his own cleansing.

NOTES:

1. Luke vii, 38, and John xii, 3.
11. *Tears like seas*, again in THE SIZE, V, 195, l. 47.
12. This threefold aspect of sin is treated in SINNES ROUND, V, 143.
14. *Dash*=bespatter.

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MARIE MAGDALENE

When blessed Marie wip'd her Saviour's feet,
(Whose precepts she had trampled on before,)
And wore them for a jewell on her head,
Shewing his steps should be the street
Wherein she thenceforth evermore
With pensive humblenesse would live and tread;

She being stain'd her self, why did she strive
To make him clean who could not be defil'd?
Why kept she not her tears for her own faults,
And not his feet? Though we could dive
In tears like seas, our sinnes are pil'd
Deeper then they, in words, and works, and thoughts.

Deare soul, she knew who did vouchsafe and deigne
To bear her filth, and that her sinnes did dash
Ev'n God himself; wherefore she was not loth,
As she had brought wherewith to stain,
So to bring in wherewith to wash.
And yet, in washing one, she washed both.

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DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Used also in THE CROSSE, V, 231.

SUBJECT:

The two greatest forces of the world and the least understood, Sin and Love, meet at their height in Christ's last hours; where the one had power to crush him in the Garden, the other to bring from his Cross life for all.

NOTES:

3. Two strains of thought, as frequently with Herbert, blend in this expression: Scientific men have applied their measuring-rods to determine the distance of the earth from the stars. The use of the measuring-rod then suggests the staff in the hand of the traveller. Cf. DIVINITIE, V, 99, l. 27. J. Howell, in a letter dated 1627, writes: "The philosopher can fathom the Deep, measure Mountains, reach the Stars with a Staff, and bless Heaven with a Girdle."

11. Perhaps an allusion to Isaiah lxiii, 3. Cf. PRAISE, V, 47, l. 38.

15. *Set abroach*=set running. The word is used again in the same connection in DIVINITIE, V, 99, l. 9.

18. John vi, 55. Cf. THE INVITATION, V, 49, l. 12.

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THE AGONIE

Philosophers have measur'd mountains,
  Fathom'd the depths of seas, of states, and kings,
Walk'd with a staffe to heav'n, and traced fountains;
  But there are two vast, spacious things,
The which to measure it doth more behove,
Yet few there are that sound them: Sinne and Love.

Who would know Sinne, let him repair
  Unto Mount Olivet; there shall he see
A man so wrung with pains that all his hair,
  His skinne, his garments bloudie be.
Sinne is that presse and vice which forceth pain
To hunt his cruell food through ev'ry vein.

Who knows not Love, let him assay
  And taste that juice which on the crosse a pike
Did set again abroach; then let him say
  If ever he did taste the like.
Love is that liquor sweet and most divine
Which my God feels as bloud; but I, as wine.

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DATE:

Not found in W.; but early in style.

METRE:

Unique.

SUBJECT:

The contrast between hearts and stones as regards their openness to Christ: the former should be tender, hospitable, clean, restful, impressible. Christ found only the latter so.

NOTES:

5. I suppose this to mean, Our hearts have room enough, and to spare; and I so punctuate. But ed. 1633 reads *our hearts good store*, without comma or apostrophe.

9. *Large*, i. e. with room for sins and trifles by the score.

10. *Whatever*, the impatient interrogative=what possible, what in the world, could the rock have done to need thee for its purification?

16. *Order;* a noun to be joined with *quiet*.

20. And therefore must employ stone. 2 Corinthians iii, 3.

23. *Loving*=from offering love to.

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SEPULCHRE

O BLESSED bodie! Whither art thou thrown?
No lodging for thee but a cold hard stone?
So many hearts on earth, and yet not one
Receive thee?
Sure there is room within our hearts—good store!
For they can lodge transgressions by the score.
Thousands of toyes dwell there, yet out of doore
They leave thee.

But that which shews them large, shews them unfit.
Whatever sinne did this pure rock commit,
Which holds thee now? Who hath indited it
Of murder?
Where our hard hearts have took up stones to brain thee,
And missing this, most falsly did arraigne thee,
Onely these stones in quiet entertain thee,
And order.

And as of old, the law by heav'nly art
Was writ in stone; so thou, which also art
The letter of the word, find'st no fit heart
To hold thee.
Yet do we still persist as we began,
And so should perish, but that nothing can,
Though it be cold, hard, foul, from loving man
Withold thee.

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INTRODUCTORY:

This curious piece is more like Giles Fletcher's work than anything else of Herbert's. It approaches its subject from the side of God and not of man, reporting heavenly events rather than — as is Herbert's way — human longings. Its style, too, is Fletcher's, treating the gravest matters sweetly and with a kind of sportive romance. Fletcher preceded Herbert both at Westminster School and Trinity College by only four years. His poem, Christ's Victories, was published in 1610. — *BAG*=mail-bag.

DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Unique.

SUBJECT:

We cannot despair, since Christ is open to all our desires. Christ's wounded side seems greatly to have impressed Herbert. Allusions to it occur in THE SACRIFICE, III, 147, l. 246; PRAYER, III, 181, l. 6; H. BAPTISME, III, 191, l. 6; DIVINITIE, V, 99, l. 9; THE AGONIE, V, 153, l. 14; THE CHURCH MILITANT, VI, 123, l. 69.

NOTES:

5. The reference of this stanza is to the storm on the Sea of Galilee. Matthew viii, 24.

6. *Well*=possibly, as in H. COMMUNION, III, 197, l. 31.

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THE BAG

Away despair! My gracious Lord doth heare.
Though windes and waves assault my keel,
He doth preserve it; he doth steer,
Ev'n when the boat seems most to reel.
Storms are the triumph of his art.
Well may he close his eyes, but not his heart.

Hast thou not heard that my Lord Jesus di'd?
Then let me tell thee a strange storie.
The God of power, as he did ride
In his majestick robes of glorie,
Resolv'd to light; and so one day
He did descend, undressing all the way.

The starres his tire of light and rings obtain'd,
The cloud his bow, the fire his spear,
The sky his azure mantle gain'd.
And when they ask'd what he would wear,
He smil'd and said, as he did go,
He had new clothes a making here below.

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15. In early Christian art the outer mantle of Christ is always blue, his inner tunic red; the latter color signifying love, the former wisdom. This seems to be the reason for the employment of *azure* in HUMILITIE, IV, 35, l. 2.
18. Cf. Hebrews ii, 17.
20. Luke ii, 7.
26. John xix, 34.
28. *Man*=guard, attendant. This poem has inspired Vaughan's Incarnation and Passion.
42. So l. 1.

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When he was come, as travellers are wont,
He did repair unto an inne.
Both then and after, many a brunt
He did endure to cancell sinne.
And having giv'n the rest before,
Here he gave up his life to pay our score.

But as he was returning, there came one
That ran upon him with a spear.
He who came hither all alone,
Bringing nor man, nor arms, nor fear,
Receiv'd the blow upon his side;
And straight he turn'd and to his brethren cry'd,

If ye have anything to send or write,
(I have no bag, but here is room)
Unto my father's hands and sight
(Beleeve me) it shall safely come.
That I shall minde what you impart,
Look, you may put it very neare my heart.

Or if hereafter any of my friends
Will use me in this kinde, the doore
Shall still be open; what he sends
I will present, and somewhat more,
Not to his hurt. Sighs will convey
Any thing to me. Heark despair, away!

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DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Of seventeen sonnets, eleven — like this — depart in the third quatrain from the Shakespearian form.

SUBJECT:

Similarities of language often correspond with similarities of meaning. See I, 165.

NOTES:

3. The rising admiration for the vernacular had been expressed by Sidney in his Defence of Poesie: "Some will say ours is a mingled language: and why not so much the better, taking the best of both the other? For the uttering sweetly and properly the conceit of the mind, which is the end of speech, that hath it equally with any tongue in the world."

4. Cf. THE CHURCH-PORCH, III, 43, l. 239.

8–10. When the light of life grows dim in parents, their fruit or issue takes it up, passing the flame along from Adam in Paradise to the latest generation among Western tribes. So in THE CHURCH MILITANT, VI, 119, 125, l. 17, 97. Is there an allusion here to Plato's torch-race? Repub. I, 328.

14. So, too, EVEN-SONG, V, 59, l. 8. But Herbert shows forbearance in not playing on this double meaning in his SUNDAY, III, 175 — as did Vaughan afterwards. Donne, too, writes: "Joy at th' uprising of this Sunne and Son:" La Corona, VII, 2.

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THE SONNE

Let forrain nations of their language boast,
What fine varietie each tongue affords,
I like our language, as our men and coast.
Who cannot dresse it well, want wit, not words.
How neatly doe we give one onely name
To parents' issue and the sunne's bright starre!
A sonne is light and fruit; a fruitful flame
Chasing the father's dimnesse, carri'd farre
From the first man in th' East to fresh and new
Western discov'ries of posteritie.
So in one word our Lord's humilitie
We turn upon him in a sense most true:
For what Christ once in humblenesse began,
We him in glorie call, *The Sonne of Man.*

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DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Unique.

SUBJECT:

Wherever love and gladness are, there too is Christ. But the association of Christ with the vine is also in Herbert's mind.

NOTES:

1, 3. *Window* and *anneal'd*. The conditions assumed in this poem are these: A church window of stained glass (for *anneal'd*, see THE WINDOWS, V, 15, l. 6) bears the design of the True Vine (John xv, 1). A section of the repeated pattern (cf. *every*, l. 3) shows a group of stem, leaves, and drooping grapes. The tendrils, curling in opposite directions, suggest by their forms to Herbert's eye the opposed curves of the letters *J* and *C*; while the *bodie*, or material suggestion of the vine, brings to his mind thoughts of festivity and human fellowship. This double suggestion is confirmed by him who understands both the window and the sources of joy.

5. This forward trait of Herbert's character is again referred to in THE ANSWER, IV, 147, l. 6.

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LOVE–JOY

As on a window late I cast mine eye,
I saw a vine drop grapes with *J* and *C*
Anneal'd on every bunch. One standing by
Ask'd what it meant. I (who am never loth
To spend my iudgement) said, It seem'd to me
To be the bodie and the letters both
Of *Joy* and *Charitie*. Sir, you have not miss'd,
The man reply'd: It figures *JESUS CHRIST*.

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INTRODUCTORY:

In B. this is placed between CHURCH-MUSICK and CHURCH-LOCK AND KEY. R. Southwell writes in Our Ladies Salutation:

"Spell Eva backe, and ave shall you finde.
The first beganne, the last reversed our harmes."

"An anagram is the transposition of the letters of a word so as that, without the omission or repeating of any letter, they compose another of quite different signification. Poets have been generally fond of this scrap of ingenuity and have always used it to the improvement or disgrace of what the word primarily signified:" G. Ryley (1714).

DATE:

Not found in W.

NOTES:

2. Perhaps a reminiscence of Hebrews viii, 2.

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ANA- { MARY / ARMY } GRAM

How well her name an *Army* doth present
In whom the *Lord of hosts* did pitch his tent!

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DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Unique. With wide rhymes,—l. 3, 9, and 6, 12.

SUBJECT:

"Ye are the temple of God:" 1 Corinthians iii, 16.

NOTES:

1. *Floore*, the groundwork of religion.
7. This poem cannot have been suggested by Salisbury Cathedral, whose choir is on a level with the nave.
10. Colossians iii, 14.
14. *Neat*=delicate.
15. *The marble weeps.* So GRIEVE NOT, VI, 17, l. 23, and a variation in THE CHURCH PORCH, III, 63, l. 417. Cf. Milton's Hymn on Christ's Nativity, l. 195: "And the chill marble seems to sweat."
16. A modification of this figure is used in CHURCH-MONUMENTS, III, 201, l. 4.

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THE CHURCH-FLOORE

Mark you the floore? That square and speckled stone,
Which looks so firm and strong,
Is *Patience.*

And th' other black and grave, wherewith each one
Is checker'd all along,
Humilitie.

The gentle rising, which on either hand
Leads to the Quire above,
Is *Confidence.*

But the sweet cement, which in one sure band
Ties the whole frame, is *Love*
And *Charitie.*

Hither sometimes Sinne steals, and stains
The marble's neat and curious veins;
But all is cleansed when the marble weeps.
Sometimes Death, puffing at the doore,
Blows all the dust about the floore;
But while he thinks to spoil the room, he sweeps.
Blest be the *Architect* whose art
Could build so strong in a weak heart.

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Garden and river Wiley, behind the Rectory at Bemerton. See Vol. I, p. 41.

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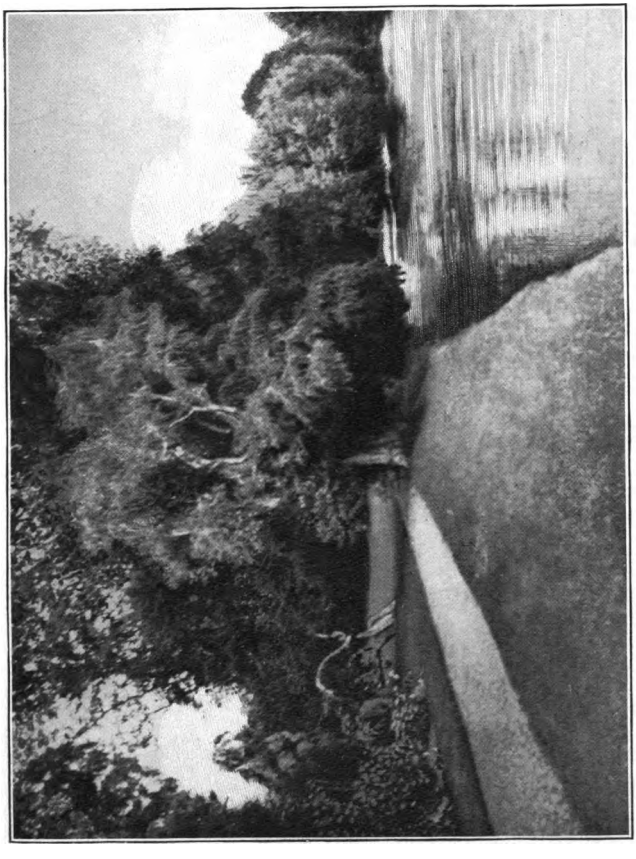

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IX

RESTLESSNESS

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PREFACE

THERE came a reaction. The little parish which had seemed so attractive in its isolation, and into which Herbert had thrown himself with such joyful eagerness, proved painfully small. For thirty-seven years he had lived in the full tide of affairs. Born in high station, he had found his associates among the leaders of the day. With the gayest, the most learned, the most widely influential men of his time, Herbert had long been living on terms of intimacy, and from them had derived much of that ability to *write fine and wittie* on which to the last he prided himself. Inaction had always been in his eyes the most dreaded of evils. Yet for the rest of his life he was to be cut off from society. He was to minister to a small group of farm laborers in a village remote from city, court, and university. His predecessor had not endured such conditions; but leaving church and parsonage in decay, had lived "at a better Parsonage house sixteen or twenty miles from this place."

At first the restrictions of Herbert's surroundings were not irksome. After the storms of the Crisis period he found peace in sacred tasks and in what he supposed to be a settled mind. It seemed as if

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at length he *past changing were, Fast in God's Paradise, where no flower can wither.* According to Walton, he remarked to a friend just after his Induction: *I now look back upon my aspiring thoughts, and think myself more happy than if I had attain'd what then I so ambitiously thirsted for. In God and his service is a fulness of all joy and pleasure, and no satiety.* Voluntarily cut off from outward activities, we have seen him joyfully developing every possibility within his own narrow bounds. He explores his priestly duties; he calls on the services of his Church to disclose their inmost significance; he records with double diligence the moods of his soul. While it is not necessary to suppose that a majority of his poems were produced in these three years, still the early manuscript contains only a minority; and a large proportion of those which first appear in the later manuscript allude to the priestly office. Herbert's art must, therefore, have been busily pursued during this time of seclusion. A kindred art he also had. "His chiefest recreation was Musick, in which heavenly Art he was a most excellent Master, and did himself compose many divine Hymns and Anthems which he set and sung to his Lute or Viol. And though he was a lover of retiredness, yet his love of Musick was such that he went usually twice every week on certain appointed days to the Cathedral Church in Salisbury; and at his return would say that *his time spent in*

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Prayer and Cathedral Musick elevated his Soul and was his Heaven upon Earth. But before his return thence to Bemerton, he would usually sing and play his part at an appointed Musick-meeting."

Such were the occupations accessible in his small parish. For one who had always lived at the centre of men and things, the change experienced could not fail to be great. It had its welcome and unwelcome sides, corresponding to the diversities in Herbert's own nature. With one side of himself — the Elizabethan and Renaissance side — he loved gayety, pleasure, great place, intellectual companionship, the stir and glitter of the world. With the other side, which connected him with the early half of the seventeenth century, he loved — profoundly and tenderly loved — an abstract and exclusive God, the guardian of unity, order, obedience, silence, one hostile to every species of earthly attachment. We have seen how on entering the priesthood he anticipated that in this divine love there could be *no satiety*. He did not find it so. The conflicts of the Crisis were renewed. Human interests, personal desires, had never died in Herbert. They never did die. That is what makes him so attractive a figure. He is ever a struggling soul, eager for God and unity, but only less eager to make the wealthy world his own. He is no calm saint. Nobody can read the stormy poems of this Group and find the epithet appropriate which has

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been connected with his name by loose admirers in his and our age. Herbert is not holy. There was always a *noise of thoughts within his heart.* However closely *joy was locked up, some bad man would let it out again.* He was continually asking of God whether *it were not better to bestow some place and power* on him; and years spent *in cold dispute of what is fit and not* were apt to appear as *only lost.* Many will feel that this failure of inward unity was due to the separatist notions under which Herbert for the most part thought of God, conceiving Him not as immanent in human affairs, but as detached and hostile. No doubt this is true; but it does not make the conflict in Herbert's soul less real or instructive. Some readers, remembering the literary habits of Herbert's age and the sonnets of its love-poets, may suspect that the extent of the conflict is exaggerated in the interests of dramatic art. But even so he paints a conflict judged appropriate to the situation. However we approach these most human of Herbert's songs, we shall find that in them justice is done to sides of life from which the saint instinctively turns. Man is a *Medley;* and Herbert, never the simple and "holy" person of popular tradition, depicts that medley with sympathetic vividness.

The Group begins with one of the greatest of his autobiographic poems; and ends with another, more allegoric, but even more detailed and confessional in character. In LOVE UNKNOWN Her-

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bert treats imaginatively the three periods of his manhood. Though he knew himself destined for the priesthood, his heart was first centred on Academic and royal honors. A dish of such fruit he gained, intending eventually to offer it to the Lord. (*This dignity hath no such earthiness in it but it may very well be joined with heaven:* Herbert to Sir J. Danvers, 1619.) But his heart needed to be detached from these things and cleansed. Then came the deaths of his friends and mother (*a sacrifice out of his fold*, l. 30), the resignation of his Oratorship, and his severe illness. These afflictions fell upon him when cold toward God,—hard of heart as regards his own appointed work. Becoming supple through affliction and through a taste of God's forgiving love, he turned to that priesthood and home where he had always expected rest. But even in Bemerton he finds dull conditions and goading thoughts. According to this interpretation, the present poem would resurvey at a later date the career already sketched in AFFLICTION, IV, 135, which is here referred to in l. 28. A more detailed but similar account is given in THE PILGRIMAGE. In THE FAMILIE, THE DISCHARGE, THE SIZE, and THE METHOD he considers reasons for contentment; in HOPE he perceives how inadequate these are; in SUBMISSION we hear of the painful contrast between the empty life at Bemerton and that to which he had aspired, a contrast resulting in the DULNESSE of the next poem

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and the rebellious mood of THE COLLAR. The sense that in the service of God there is little rewarding joy suggests in the next three poems that God has withdrawn his favor, and gives rise to tender lament. CONSCIENCE insists on obedience. But in one of the most pathetic poems of the series, THE CROSSE, we learn how partly through illness, and partly through a restless heart, the priesthood is proving a disappointment.

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RESTLESSNESS

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INTRODUCTORY:

"This poem is a striking example and illustration that the characteristic fault of our elder poets is the reverse of that which distinguishes too many of our recent versifiers: the one conveying the most fantastic thoughts in the most correct and natural language; the other in the most fantastic language conveying the most trivial thoughts. The latter is a riddle of words, the former an enigma of thoughts:" Coleridge, Biog. Lit. XIX.

DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Used also in A WREATH, IV, 115, and GRIEF, VI, 83.

SUBJECT:

Unperceived by us, the severities of God express his love and wisdom. John xiii, 7.

NOTES:

1. This is the only poem in which Herbert professes to speak with a friend; and the friend is but another mood of Herbert himself (l. 11).
3. *Complie*=join, sympathize.
4. Cf. REDEMPTION, IV, 33, l. 1.
5. For the *two lives* see MAN'S MEDLEY, V, 125.
6–18. Cf. AN OFFERING, IV, 189, l. 3–5.
6. The Cambridge scholarship and poetry.
8. A similar partition of a poem by refrains occurs in THE CHURCH MILITANT, VI, 121, l. 48.

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LOVE UNKNOWN

DEARE Friend, sit down, the tale is long and sad,
And in my faintings I presume your loue
Will more complie then help. A Lord I had,
And have, of whom some grounds which may improve
I hold for two lives, and both lives in me.
To him I brought a dish of fruit one day,
And in the middle plac'd my heart. But he
(I sigh to say)
Lookt on a servant who did know his eye
Better then you know me, or (which is one)
Then I my self. The servant instantly,
Quitting the fruit, seiz'd on my heart alone
And threw it in a font wherein did fall
A stream of bloud which issu'd from the side
Of a great rock. I well remember all
And have good cause. There it was dipt and di'd,
And washt and wrung; the very wringing yet
Enforceth tears. *Your heart was foul, I fear.*
Indeed 't is true. I did and do commit
Many a fault more then my lease will bear,
Yet still askt pardon and was not deni'd.
But you shall heare. After my heart was well,
And clean and fair, as I one even-tide
(I sigh to tell)

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14. Here, as in the popular hymn, Rock of Ages, there appears to be a double allusion to the striking of the rock by Moses and the piercing of Christ's side. Numbers xx, 11, and John xix, 34. A similar blending occurs in THE SACRIFICE, III, 139, l. 170.
22. *Was well.* Cf. AFFLICTION, IV, 139, l. 31. When my heart was cleansed of desire for worldly honor and I had decided on the priesthood.
25. *Wallt by my self abroad*, the Crisis period.
28. Herbert has five poems with this title. The reference here is to the one in IV, 135, written after the death of his mother.
40. Matthew xxvi, 28.
42. Cf. THE INVITATION, V, 49, l. 12.
43. *For good*=for my good. The church ordinances, which to those around me were routine matters, had gained for me an inner meaning, in which as a priest I hoped now to rest.

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Walkt by my self abroad, I saw a large
And spacious fornace flaming, and thereon
A boyling caldron round about whose verge
Was in great letters set *AFFLICTION*.
The greatnesse shew'd the owner. So I went
To fetch a sacrifice out of my fold,
Thinking with that which I did thus present
To warm his love, which I did fear grew cold.
But as my heart did tender it, the man
Who was to take it from me slipt his hand
And threw my heart into the scalding pan —
My heart, that brought it (do you understand?)
The offerer's heart. *Your heart was hard, I fear.*
Indeed 't is true. I found a callous matter
Began to spread and to expatiate there;
But with a richer drug then scalding water
I bath'd it often, ev'n with holy bloud,
Which at a board, while many drunk bare wine,
A friend did steal into my cup for good,
Ev'n taken inwardly, and most divine
To supple hardnesses. But at the length
Out of the caldron getting, soon I fled
Unto my house, where to repair the strength
Which I had lost, I hasted to my bed.
But when I thought to sleep out all these faults
(I sigh to speak)

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51. Home and the quiet of Bemerton brought restless thoughts.

55. Cf. CHURCH-LOCK AND KEY, IV, 97, l. 1.

56. The *dulnesse* which is lamented in the poem of that name, V, 207.

59. So THE METHOD, V, 197, l. 15.

60. THE BAG, V, 159, l. 24.

70. In these adjectives are summed up some of the most constant desires of Herbert and of his age,— to be ever fresh, sensitive, and alert,— desires which in Herbert's case were continually thwarted by feeble health.

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I found that some had stuff'd the bed with thoughts,
I would say *thorns*. Deare, could my heart not break,
When with my pleasures ev'n my rest was gone?
Full well I understood who had been there,
For I had giv'n the key to none but one.
It must be he. *Your heart was dull, I fear.*
Indeed a slack and sleepie state of minde
Did oft possesse me, so that when I pray'd,
Though my lips went, my heart did stay behinde.
But all my scores were by another paid,
Who took the debt upon him. *Truly, Friend,*
For ought I heare, your Master shows to you
More favour then you wot of. Mark the end:
The Font did onely what was old renew,
The Caldron suppled what was grown too hard,
The Thorns did quicken what was grown too dull,
All did but strive to mend what you had marr'd.
Wherefore be cheer'd, and praise him to the full
Each day, each houre, each moment of the week,
Who fain would have you be new, tender, quick.

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DATE:

Not found in W. He finds murmurings lurking in his priestly heart.

METRE:

Unique.

SUBJECT:

Peace, Silence, Order, Obedience, Joy, Grief, are the true members of God's Household.

NOTES:

2. *A part*, a musical part; as *noise* in the preceding line is probably intended for jarring music. So AARON, V, 11, l. 8.

4. *Rule or eares*. *Rule* refers to *pulling*, in the previous line, and *eares* to *loud*.

5. Cf. MAN, IV, 11, l. 2–4.

7. Mark xi, 15–17.

8. *Neat*=refinedly beautiful. So MAN, IV, 17, l. 42.

10. *Plaies*. The preposition is omitted, as when we speak of playing the harp.

12. The rank growths of the soul are brought into order. Cf. PARADISE, V, 39.

20. *Shrill*=penetrating. Milton's "Shrill matin song," Par. Lost, V, 7. But that the expression was a daring one, even for Herbert, is plain from Vaughan's repeating it in the first line of his Admission: "How shrill are silent tears!"

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THE FAMILIE

What doth this noise of thoughts within my heart,
As if they had a part?
What do these loud complaints and pulling fears,
As if there were no rule or eares?

But, Lord, the house and familie are thine,
Though some of them repine.
Turn out these wranglers which defile thy seat,
For where thou dwellest all is neat.

First Peace and Silence all disputes controll,
Then Order plaies the soul;
And giving all things their set forms and houres,
Makes of wilde woods sweet walks and bowres.

Humble Obedience neare the doore doth stand,
Expecting a command;
Then whom in waiting nothing seems more slow,
Nothing more quick when she doth go.

Joyes oft are there, and griefs as oft as joyes,
But griefs without a noise;
Yet speak they louder then distemper'd fears.
What is so shrill as silent tears?

This is thy house, with these it doth abound.
And where these are not found,
Perhaps thou com'st sometimes and for a day,
But not to make a constant stay.

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DATE:

Not found in W. He finds himself reprehensibly wondering if he has been wise in taking orders.

METRE:

Unique, but differs only in rhyming system from JUDGEMENT, IV, 67.

SUBJECT:

Having now committed myself to God, let anxieties cease. Away, distrust! Matthew vi, 25–34.

NOTES:

3. "*Licorous*, probably from the licking of the lips of men and animals when slavering and greedy-desirous; and is metaphorically applied to the eyes. Lecherous is in fact the same word, but more confined by present custom to one form of desire:" A. B. Grosart. *He that for quality is licorous after dainties is a glutton:* COUNTRY PARSON, XXVI.

8. *Depart*=dispense, part with. Cf. OBEDIENCE, IV, 181, l. 8. Throughout this poem there is constant reference to OBEDIENCE, where his decision to become a priest was originally reached.

11. *Is gone*=is determined already by your past act.

13. Exodus xiii, 21.

16. *This*=the disasters and comforts of the Crisis time. He made thee a priest, as in l. 11.

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THE DISCHARGE

Busie enquiring heart, what wouldst thou know?
Why dost thou prie,
And turn, and leer, and with a licorous eye
Look high and low,
And in thy lookings stretch and grow?

Hast thou not made thy counts and summ'd up all?
Did not thy heart
Give up the whole and with the whole depart?
Let what will fall,
That which is past who can recall?

Thy life is God's, thy time to come is gone,
And is his right.
He is thy night at noon, he is at night
Thy noon alone.
The crop is his, for he hath sown.

And well it was for thee, when this befell,
That God did make
Thy businesse his, and in thy life partake;
For thou canst tell,
If it be his once, all is well.

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22–25. Fortunate to know what the present demands, without cudgelling your brains over the future.

30. It will grow fast enough without your digging for it.

31. *Provide*=look forward.

32. "The reverse of going upon or acting on the square =acts disloyally, breaks the agreement that the present is his and the future his God's:" A. B. Grosart. *John the Baptist squared out* [i. e. assigned] *to every one what to do:* COUNTRY PARSON, XXXII.

34. Same use of *wide* in H. BAPTISME, III, 191, l. 8.

39. *Those grounds*=the future, separated from us by death.

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Onely the present is thy part and fee.
And happy thou
If, though thou didst not beat thy future brow,
Thou couldst well see
What present things requir'd of thee.

They ask enough. Why shouldst thou further go?
Raise not the mudde
Of future depths, but drink the cleare and good.
Dig not for wo
In times to come, for it will grow.

Man and the present fit; if he provide,
He breaks the square.
This houre is mine; if for the next I care,
I grow too wide,
And do encroach upon death's side.

For death each houre environs and surrounds.
He that would know
And care for future chances, cannot go
Unto those grounds
But through a Church-yard which them
bounds.

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45. "The phrase is taken from tilting a cask on end to get all out of the tap:" A. B. Grosart. This does not fit the context, which requires that *an end* shall mean at *great length*. The explanation is found in an early use of *bottom* in the sense of a spool or holder on which thread is wound. So Herbert uses it in 1622 in a letter to his mother in her sickness: *I have alwaies observ'd the thred of life to be like other threds or skenes of silk, full of snarles and incumbrances. Happy is he whose bottome is wound up and laid ready for work in the New Jerusalem.* The New English Dictionary cites an example from Ralegh's History of the World: "He receiveth from her [Ariadne] a *bottom* of thread." The meaning here accordingly is that, by anticipating, men pull an end from the spool of grief and unroll the whole ball. And this, so far from putting away the trouble, gives length to it. The same figure is applied in a different way in THE CHURCH-PORCH, III, 29, l. 124. The word may possibly have a similar meaning in CHURCH-RENTS AND SCHISMES, V, 105, l. 6.

46. Causes of fear are tied up in the future. Do not release them, l. 48, nor make to-morrow sad. Our proverb says: "Let sleeping dogs lie."

54. So THE BAG, V, 157, l. 1.

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Things present shrink and die. But they that spend
Their thoughts and sense
On future grief, do not remove it thence,
But it extend,
And draw the bottome out an end.

God chains the dog till night. Wilt loose the chain,
And wake thy sorrow?
Wilt thou forestall it, and now grieve tomorrow,
And then again
Grieve over freshly all thy pain?

Either grief will not come, or if it must,
Do not forecast.
And while it cometh it is almost past.
Away distrust!
My God hath promis'd, he is just.

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INTRODUCTORY:

How great may one be who would also be a servant of God? *Size* is used in this sense in FAITH, IV, 31, l. 28, and in THE ROSE, IV, 185, l. 4.

DATE:

Not found in W. He is trying to adjust himself to narrow conditions.

METRE:

Unique.

SUBJECT:

In this world there come to the Christian small joys, — and it is well.

NOTES:

5, 6. As streams in the lowlands are kept alive by waters higher up, so let your gentle joys be stirred by those on high.

7. *Fraught*=freight.

9. Enough pleasure to render grief endurable.

21. *Those have.* The great joys are already in possession of their hopes.

22. *On score*, i. e. on trust, as in THE BAG, V, 159, l. 24.

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THE SIZE

CONTENT thee, greedie heart.
Modest and moderate joyes to those that have
Title to more hereafter when they part,
Are passing brave.
Let th' upper springs into the low
Descend and fall, and thou dost flow.

What though some have a fraught
Of cloves and nutmegs, and in cinamon sail;
If thou hast wherewithall to spice a draught,
When griefs prevail,
And for the future time art heir
To th' Isle of spices, is't not fair?

To be in both worlds full
Is more then God was, who was hungrie here.
Wouldst thou his laws of fasting disanull? 15
Enact good cheer?
Lay out thy joy, yet hope to save it?
Wouldst thou both eat thy cake and have it?

Great joyes are all at once,
But little do reserve themselves for more.
Those have their hopes; these what they have renounce,
And live on score.
Those are at home, these journey still
And meet the rest on Sion's hill.

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25. Luke vi, 24–26.
29. Cf. AFFLICTION, IV, 135, l. 10.
35. The split infinitive is rare in Herbert's verse. I have not found another instance.
36. Like one still in pursuit, not in assured and happy possession. *Pretend* is used in this sense in UNKINDNESSE, IV, 105, l. 16.
38. 1 Timothy vi, 10.
40. An absent line here, omitted both in 1632 and in B., is thus supplied by Dr. Grosart: *At all times fall.* Ernest Rhys proposes: *Did always fall.*
41. Instead of reckoning time from the last great storm, some joy would mark our epoch.
42. Dr. Grosart thinks *seam* is used here in the sense of pocket. Do not expect to pocket up blessings.
46. An emblem, like those described by Quarles, or like that of HOPE, V, 203.

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Thy Saviour sentenc'd joy,
And in the flesh condemn'd it as unfit,
At least in lump, for such doth oft destroy;
Whereas a bit
Doth tice us on to hopes of more,
And for the present health restore.

A Christian's state and case
Is not a corpulent, but a thinne and spare
Yet active strength; whose long and bonie face
Content and care
Do seem to equally divide—
Like a pretender, not a bride.

Wherefore sit down, good heart.
Grasp not at much, for fear thou losest all.
If comforts fell according to desert,
They would great frosts and snows destroy;
For we should count, Since the last joy.

Then close again the seam
Which thou hast open'd. Do not spread thy robe
In hope of great things. Call to minde thy dream,
An earthly globe,
On whose meridian was engraven,
These seas are tears, and heav'n the haven.

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DATE:

Not found in W. He questions why he is not nearer God.

METRE:

Used also in GOOD FRIDAY, III, 149, but with different rhyming system.

SUBJECT:

Our method of treating God, and his of treating us. A slight early sketch of this theme is found in CHURCH-LOCK AND KEY, IV, 97.

NOTES:

3. *Rub*=hindrance. Hamlet's, "Ay, there's the rub:" iii, 1.

6. *Move*=propose, used much as in parliamentary proceedings. So *motion* is used in l. 19 and 23. Cf. PRAISE, IV, 193, l. 4, THE CALL, V, 9, l. 10, and PERSEVERANCE, VI, 155, l. 3. Lord Herbert entitles one of his poems An Ode on a Question Moved Whether Love Should Continue For Ever.

10. *Tumble thy breast;* so CHURCH-PORCH, III, 31, l. 148.

15. So LOVE UNKNOWN, V, 183, l. 59.

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THE METHOD

Poore heart, lament.
For since thy God refuseth still,
There is some rub, some discontent,
Which cools his will.

Thy Father *could*
Quickly effect what thou dost move,
For he is *Power;* and sure he *would*,
For he is *Love.*

Go search this thing,
Tumble thy breast and turn thy book.
If thou hadst lost a glove or ring,
Wouldst thou not look?

What do I see
Written above there? *Yesterday*
I did behave me carelesly
When I did pray.

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18. *Indifferents* = careless persons.

23. *I conceive the restraining motions are much more frequent to the godly then inviting motions:* To the 49th Consideration of Valdesso.

27. The rhyme was already used in l. 19.

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And should God's eare
To such indifferents chained be
Who do not their own motions heare?
Is God lesse free?

But stay! What's there?
Late when I would have something done,
I had a motion to forbear,
Yet I went on.

And should God's eare,
Which needs not man, be ty'd to those
Who heare not him, but quickly heare
His utter foes?

Then once more pray.
Down with thy knees, up with thy voice.
Seek pardon first, and God will say,
Glad heart rejoyce.

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HOPE

INTRODUCTORY:

Emblems, both of word and picture, were much in fashion in Herbert's day. Quarles' Emblems (1635) well met the current taste. An emblem engraved upon a ring similar to the emblems mentioned here was sent to Herbert by Dr. Donne. It is described in Walton's Life, and in Herbert's verses of acknowledgment, VI, 161. According to the prints of it that have come down to us, it had on one side an anchor used as a cross, and on the other side a growing plant bearing *a few green eares*. If this poem was in any way suggested by Donne's seal, its date is not earlier than 1630–31. Walton says the seals were engraved a little before Donne's death in 1631. About the interpretation of this poem there are discussions in Notes and Queries, IX, 154; X, 18, 333.

DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Unique.

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SUBJECT:

Herbert's constant subject, the contradictions of love, which may here be entitled The Weariness of Hope. It is the theme of THE COLLAR, V, 211, but does not, like that poem, find a conclusion in the acceptance of love.

To Love I gave my time, prayers, tears. Serving Love long and getting small return, I remind him of time passing, prayers offered, tears shed. Still he gives only hopes, visions, immature fruit. I despair. Translating into abstract terms Herbert's imagery of things, the sequence of his thought might be represented thus:

To Love I said, "Hast thou forgotten Time?"
"Time counts for naught with Love, for Love is Hope."
But I prayed still the prayer I ever prayed.
"Look far away," said Love, "Not on things near."
I wept.
"Nay, here and now is fruit," he said. "Unripe, indeed."
"Why such delay?" cried I. "Give all or none!"

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NOTES:

2. Hebrews vi, 9.

4. *Optick*=telescope. The word occurs again in the lines TO THE QUEENE OF BOHEMIA, VI, 185, l. 13. Milton, remembering Gálileo, speaks of "The moon whose orb Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views:" Par. Lost, I, 287.

5. Cf. PRAISE, V, 47, l. 27.

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HOPE

I GAVE to Hope a watch of mine; but he
An anchor gave to me.
Then an old prayer-book I did present;
And he an optick sent.
With that I gave a viall full of tears;
But he a few green eares.
Ah Loyterer! I'le no more, no more I'le bring.
I did expect a ring.

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DATE:

Not found in W. His hopes of greatness blighted in Bemerton parish.

METRE:

Used also in THE 23 PSALME, V, 19.

SUBJECT:

The ambitious heart, knowing its blindness, reluctantly accepts the small appointed work.

NOTES:

2. My power and right of judgment are given up to God.
4. *My designe*, i. e. of political preferment.
10. My private judgment, l. 2.
12. *Disseize*=dispossess. Love, III, 85, l. 26.
17. *Gift;* cf. l. 2 and 11.
19. The same thought occurs again in OBEDIENCE, IV, 183, l. 23–25. Psalm cxxxix, 10.

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SUBMISSION

But that Thou art my wisdome, Lord,
And both mine eyes are thine,
My minde would be extreamly stirr'd
For missing my designe.

Were it not better to bestow
Some place and power on me?
Then should thy praises with me grow,
And share in my degree.

But when I thus dispute and grieve,
I do resume my sight,
And pilfring what I once did give,
Disseize thee of thy right.

How know I, if thou shouldst me raise,
That I should then raise thee?
Perhaps great places and thy praise
Do not so well agree.

Wherefore unto my gift I stand;
I will no more advise.
Onely do thou lend me a hand,
Since thou hast both mine eyes.

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DATE:

Not found in W. Mental inertness deplored.

METRE:

Used also in GIDDINESSE, V, 129.

SUBJECT:

Why, when gay wits celebrate their mistresses on every trivial occasion, have I such torpor in honoring my love? A first sketch of THE FORERUNNERS, VI, 77.

NOTES:

3. *Quicknesse*=vivacity of mind (l. 25).

7. The phrase is repeated in JORDAN, III, 91, l. 5.

12. As truly as the *fairest fair* (l. 6).

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DULNESSE

Why do I languish thus, drooping and dull,
As if I were all earth?
O give me quicknesse, that I may with mirth
Praise thee brim-full!

The wanton lover in a curious strain
Can praise his fairest fair,
And with quaint metaphors her curled hair
Curl o're again.

Thou art my lovelinesse, my life, my light,
Beautie alone to me.
Thy bloudy death and undeserv'd makes thee
Pure red and white.

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13. Taking up again l. 10.
14. A parenthetic line — And that perfection those which, etc.
18. For a *window-song*, Dr. Grosart refers to Sidney's Astrophel and Stella, LIII.
19. *Pretending* = stretching forth, aspiring, as in JORDAN, III, 93, l. 16.
21. *Sugred lyes*. The phrase is used also in THE ROSE, IV, 185, l. 2.

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When all perfections as but one appeare —
That, those thy form doth show —
The very dust where thou dost tread and go
Makes beauties here.

Where are my lines then? My approaches? Views?
Where are my window-songs?
Lovers are still pretending, and ev'n wrongs
Sharpen their Muse.

But I am lost in flesh, whose sugred lyes
Still mock me and grow bold.
Sure thou didst put a minde there, if I could
Finde where it lies.

Lord, cleare thy gift, that with a constant wit
I may but look towards thee.
Look onely; for to *love* thee, who can be,
What angel fit?

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INTRODUCTORY:

THE COLLAR=restraint.

DATE:

Not found in W. Herbert has already entered the priesthood, but finds the experience of it irksome.

METRE:

Unique. Rhymes irregular and very widely spaced, those of l. 3–10 and 13–23 being the widest in Herbert.

SUBJECT:

The irritating restraints of righteousness only appeased by love.

NOTES:

4. *Lines and life;* cf. THE BANQUET, V, 57, l. 51.
5. *Store*=amplest abundance. So THE PEARL, IV, 179, l. 26. Dr. Grosart gives the amazing explanation, "As abounding in choice vanities as a store."
6. Shall I always be a petitioner, never a master?

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THE COLLAR

I STRUCK the board, and cry'd, No more!
I will abroad.
What? Shall I ever sigh and pine?
My lines and life are free, free as the rode,
Loose as the winde, as large as store.
Shall I be still in suit?
Have I no harvest but a thorn
To let me bloud, and not restore
What I have lost with cordiall fruit?
Sure there was wine
Before my sighs did drie it. There was corn
Before my tears did drown it.
Is the yeare onely lost to me?
Have I no bayes to crown it?
No flowers, no garlands gay? All blasted?
All wasted?

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18. The same turn in THE QUIP, V, 33, l. 7.

24. Of binding power, though really only a rope of sand.

26. *Wink*=intentionally shut the eyes. So MISERIE, IV, 53, l. 62, and Acts xvii, 30.

29. Take away the scarecrows. Manufactured fears shall no longer stop my breaking away.

33–36. Dr. Grosart well refers to Parentalia, VIII, l. 7–10:

> *Tandem prehensa comiter lacernula*
> *Susurrat aure quispiam,*
> *Haec fuerat olim potio Domini tui.*
> *Gusto proboque dolium.*

35. *Me thoughts:* so ARTILLERIE, IV, 157, l. 2.

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Not so, my heart! But there is fruit,
And thou hast hands.
Recover all thy sigh-blown age
On double pleasures. Leave thy cold dispute
Of what is fit and not. Forsake thy cage,
Thy rope of sands,
Which pettie thoughts have made, and made to thee
Good cable, to enforce and draw,
And be thy law,
While thou didst wink and wouldst not see.
Away! Take heed!
I will abroad.
Call in thy death's head there. Tie up thy fears.
He that forbears
To suit and serve his need
Deserves his load.
But as I rav'd and grew more fierce and wilde
At every word,
Me thoughts I heard one calling, *Childe!*
And I reply'd, *My Lord.*

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INTRODUCTORY:

The grapes of Eshcol. Numbers xiii, 23.

DATE:

Not found in W. See notes on l. 4 and 9.

METRE:

Unique.

SUBJECT:

We experience all that the Israelites did in the wilderness, except the welcome clusters at the journey's end. But no: instead of the refreshment which those who were under the Law from time to time obtained, we have continually the new wine of Christ's blood.

NOTES:

4. *Sev'n* may be used merely as a round number. Yet if, as is probable, this poem was written somewhere near the middle of his Bemerton life, the time here indicated would fall before the death of King James, of Herbert's mother, and of those other friends lamented in AFFLICTION, IV, 139, l. 31–36. This was Herbert's last period of secular employment. Whatever the special reference of this date may be, it places the poem late in his life. — "*Vogue* = a free course with a full sail; and hence *aire* in line 5:" A. B. Grosart.

7. Numbers xxxiii, 10.

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THE BUNCH OF GRAPES

Joy, I did lock thee up, but some bad man
Hath let thee out again;
And now, me thinks, I am where I began
Sev'n yeares ago. One vogue and vein,
One aire of thoughts usurps my brain.
I did toward Canaan draw, but now I am
Brought back to the Red sea, the sea of shame.

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8. The course of thought in this stanza is not at once obvious. It is something like this: On account of rebellions, God did not permit the Israelites to reach an abiding city. But their story is our story. Nothing which has moved men widely is an individual affair; each step in a divine transaction is typical and for all time. So God's justice to the Jews will be proved his justice to us.
9. It is in the isolation of Bemerton, his desert, far from London and Cambridge, that Herbert feels the hardship of the march toward Canaan, i. e. the priesthood. The sacred wine — his priestly work — must be his comfort.
10. *Spann'd*=have journeys of the same span or length. 1 Corinthians x, 11.
24. Herbert gathers together the notable cases of grapes: the grapes of Eshcol, l. 19; the vineyard of Noah, fruitful to his injury (Genesis ix, 20, and THE CHURCH MILITANT, VI, 119, l. 15); the wine-press of Isaiah (Isaiah lxiii, 3); and Christ the true vine (John xv, 1).
28. Mark xiv, 24.

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For as the Jews of old by God's command
Travell'd and saw no town,
So now each Christian hath his journeys spann'd.
Their storie pennes and sets us down.
A single deed is small renown.
God's works are wide, and let in future times.
His ancient justice overflows our crimes.

Then have we too our guardian fires and clouds.
Our Scripture-dew drops fast.
We have our sands and serpents, tents and shrowds.
Alas! Our murmurings come not last.
But where's the cluster? Where's the taste
Of mine inheritance? Lord, if I must borrow,
Let me as well take up their joy as sorrow.

But can he want the grape who hath the wine?
I have their fruit and more.
Blessed be God, who prosper'd *Noah's* vine
And made it bring forth grapes good store.
But much more him I must adore
Who of the law's sowre juice sweet wine did make,
Ev'n God himself being pressed for my sake.

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DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Unique.

SUBJECT:

"Oh that I knew where I might find him!" Job xxiii, 3.

NOTES:

3. Psalm xlii, 3.
4. *Prove*=reach certainty and success.
6. The *sphere* is the *skie* of l. 5, and the *centre* the earth, as in PRAYER, III, 183, l. 9.
8. The opposite of Psalm cxxxix, 8.
14. *Simper*=change countenance, twinkle. In THE CHURCH-PORCH, III, 29, l. 123, and AFFLICTION, IV, 139, l. 44, as here, a *simper* is the smile worn when one meets his superiors.
20. Genesis viii, 9.

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THE SEARCH

Whither, O, whither art thou fled,
My Lord, my Love?
My searches are my daily bread,
Yet never prove.

My knees pierce th' earth, mine eies the skie,
And yet the sphere
And centre both to me denie
That thou art there.

Yet can I mark how herbs below
Grow green and gay,
As if to meet thee they did know,
While I decay.

Yet can I mark how starres above
Simper and shine,
As having keyes unto thy love,
While poore I pine.

I sent a sigh to seek thee out,
Deep drawn in pain,
Wing'd like an arrow; but my scout
Returns in vain.

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25. Dost thou withhold thy visits because somewhere thou art making a new, good world, and abandoning the old bad one?
29. Psalm lxxvii, 7–9.
33. *Let not that*,—i. e. thy will,—of all things, be what cuts me off from thee. The next three stanzas call upon God to exercise that will in Herbert's behalf.
35. *Ring*=fence, barrier.
36. *Passe*=overcome, surmount them.

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I tun'd another (having store)
Into a grone,
Because the search was dumbe before;
But all was one.

Lord, dost thou some new fabrick mold,
Which favour winnes
And keeps thee present, leaving th' old
Unto their sinnes?

Where is my God? What hidden place
Conceals thee still?
What covert dare eclipse thy face?
Is it thy will?

O let not that of any thing!
Let rather brasse,
Or steel, or mountains be thy ring,
And I will passe.

Thy will such an intrenching is
As passeth thought.
To it all strength, all subtilties
Are things of nought.

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41. As this stanza partially repeats the thought of the preceding, so the rhyme of that is partially repeated.
47. *Charge*=burden.
52. Cf. JUSTICE, V, 117, l. 24.
55. Romans viii, 35.
58. Referring to l. 41.
59. Excels all else. Cf. CHURCH-PORCH, III, 37, l. 187.
60. So ANTIPHON, III, 107, l. 23.

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Thy will such a strange distance is
As that to it
East and West touch, the poles do kisse,
And parallels meet.

Since then my grief must be as large
As is thy space,
Thy distance, from me; see my charge,
Lord, see my case.

O take these barres, these lengths away!
Turn, and restore me.
Be not Almightie, let me say,
Against, but for me.

When thou dost turn and wilt be neare,
What edge so keen,
What point so piercing, can appeare
To come between?

For as thy absence doth excell
All distance known,
So doth thy nearenesse bear the bell,
Making two one.

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INTRODUCTORY:

ASSURANCE=The ground of confidence. Cf. AARON, V, 11.

DATE:

Not found in W. He is failing in his work as a priest.

METRE:

Used also in AFFLICTION, IV, 43.

SUBJECT:

From suspicious thoughts about God's favor I take refuge in Himself.

NOTES:

6. There is no poison so deadly as the inventions of distrust.

9–12. All this is the allegation of his *spitefull thought*. In l. 11 and elsewhere in this poem there seems to be allusion to the covenant of OBEDIENCE, IV, 181.

13. Can anything be worse than this?

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ASSURANCE

O SPITEFULL bitter thought!
Bitterly spitefull thought! Couldst thou invent
So high a torture? Is such poyson bought?
Doubtlesse but in the way of punishment,
When wit contrives to meet with thee,
No such rank poyson can there be.

Thou said'st but even now
That all was not so fair as I conceiv'd
Betwixt my God and me: that I allow
And coin large hopes, but that I was deceiv'd;
Either the league was broke or neare it,
And that I had great cause to fear it.

And what to this? What more
Could poyson, if it had a tongue, expresse?
What is thy aim? Wouldst thou unlock the doore
To cold despairs and gnawing pensivenesse?
Wouldst thou raise devils? I see, I know,
I writ thy purpose long ago.

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22. If the ground of my confidence were myself and not thee, l. 25.

24. The *foes* are inner foes, sins.

28. Does the *league* here and in l. 11 refer to the priesthood? Cf. OBEDIENCE, IV, 183, l. 32–35.

35. Psalm xxxi, 3; Mark xiii, 31.

38. This fancy that God is against thee, a fancy which merely hides thy own shame,—that thou art against God. Genesis iii, 7.

39–40. "Thou hast cast a bone of contention which has rebounded on thyself and chokes thee:" A. B. Grosart. Cf. THE COUNTRY PARSON, XXVIII: *He that throws a stone at another hits himselfe.* In a letter dated 1622, J. Howell, describing the former English alliance with the Netherlands, writes: "This was the Bone that Secretary Walsingham told Queen Elizabeth he would cast the King of Spain, that should last him twenty years and perhaps make his teeth shake in his head."

41, 42. To satisfy his own nature God went forth to man, and He will not fail to finish his work. John xiii, 1.

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But I will to my Father,
Who heard thee say it. O most gracious Lord,
If all the hope and comfort that I gather
Were from my self, I had not half a word,
Not half a letter to oppose
What is objected by my foes.

But thou art my desert,
And in this league, which now my foes invade,
Thou art not onely to perform thy part,
But also mine; as when the league was made
Thou didst at once thy self indite,
And hold my hand while I did write.

Wherefore if thou canst fail,
Then can thy truth and I. But while rocks stand,
And rivers stirre, thou canst not shrink or quail.
Yea, when both rocks and all things shall disband,
Then shalt thou be my rock and tower,
And make their ruine praise thy power.

Now foolish thought go on,
Spin out thy thread and make thereof a coat
To hide thy shame; for thou hast cast a bone
Which bounds on thee, and will not down thy throat.
What for it self love once began,
Now love and truth will end in man.

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DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Unique.

SUBJECT:

The stern exactions of Conscience stilled by Christ.

NOTES:

5. *Chatting*=chattering.

6. All that I see or hear is distorted.

10. The rhyme *there* and *sphere* had already been used in PRAYER, III, 183, l. 11.

13–24. Not only does the blood of Christ, accepted in the Communion wine, cleanse us (*my physick*, l. 15) so that conscience can no longer accuse, but the love of Christ as a moral principle is so at issue with the self-conscious calculations of the Law that it may be said to be a bill-hook or staff capable of turning the attack against conscience itself (*my sword*, l. 24).

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CONSCIENCE

Peace pratler, do not lowre!
Not a fair look but thou dost call it foul.
Not a sweet dish but thou dost call it sowre.
Musick to thee doth howl.
By listning to thy chatting fears
I have both lost mine eyes and eares.

Pratler, no more, I say!
My thoughts must work, but like a noiselesse sphere;
Harmonious peace must rock them all the day.
No room for pratlers there.
If thou persistest, I will tell thee
That I have physick to expell thee.

And the receit shall be
My Saviour's bloud. Whenever at his board
I do but taste it, straight it cleanseth me
And leaves thee not a word;
No, not a tooth or nail to scratch,
And at my actions carp or catch.

Yet if thou talkest still,
Besides my physick know there's some for thee;
Some wood and nails to make a staffe or bill
For those that trouble me.
The bloudie crosse of my deare Lord
Is both my physick and my sword.

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DATE:

Not found in W.

METRE:

Used also in THE AGONIE, V, 153.

SUBJECT:

What I have obtained after years of desire I am now powerless to use. With this poem compare the close of LOVE UNKNOWN, V, 183, and of THE PILGRIMAGE, V, 239.

NOTES:

5, 6. These lines give some of the reasons which induced Herbert to accept the living of Bemerton from his great kinsman. He hoped through the influence of the neighboring Pembroke family at Wilton House to strengthen his work as a parish priest.

8. *This deare end*=the priesthood, the aim described in l. 3.

10. *For myself, dear mother, I alwaies fear'd sickness more then death; because sickness hath made me unable to perform those offices for which I came into the world:* Herbert's letter, 1622.

13. Cf. AFFLICTION, IV, 137, l. 27.

16. Cf. GRATEFULNESSE, V, 43, l. 22.

18. I still retain a strong desire for thy work, embittering my feebleness.

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THE CROSSE

WHAT is this strange and uncouth thing?
To make me sigh, and seek, and faint, and die,
Untill I had some place where I might sing,
And serve thee; and not onely I,
But all my wealth and familie might combine
To set thy honour up as our designe.

And then when after much delay,
Much wrastling, many a combate, this deare end,
So much desir'd, is giv'n, to take away
My power to serve thee! To unbend
All my abilities, my designes confound,
And lay my threatnings bleeding on the ground!

One ague dwelleth in my bones,
Another in my soul (the memorie
What I would do for thee if once my grones
Could be allow'd for harmonie).
I am in all a weak disabled thing,
Save in the sight thereof where strength doth sting.

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21. *On me*=against me. The edge is the means of wounding. Cf. AFFLICTION, IV, 139, l. 33.

22. Psalm cii, 10. So Donne, Hymn to God in My Sickness, l. 30:

"Be this my text, my sermon to mine own:
Therefore, that he may raise, the Lord throws down."

30. *A weed*, as in EMPLOYMENT, IV, 145, l. 22, instead of such a flower as is described in THE FLOWER, VI, 67, l. 23. At present he is in Paradise (V, 39), but suffers from lack of occupation. Cf. THE COUNTRY PARSON, XXXII: *Even in Paradise man had a calling, and how much more out of Paradise, when the evills which he is now subject unto may be prevented, or diverted by reasonable imployment.*

36. *My words*=thy words made mine.

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Besides, things sort not to my will
  Ev'n when my will doth studie thy renown.
Thou turnest th' edge of all things on me still,
    Taking me up to throw me down.
So that ev'n when my hopes seem to be sped
I am to grief alive, to them as dead.

To have my aim, and yet to be
  Farther from it then when I bent my bow;
To make my hopes my torture and the fee
    Of all my woes another wo,
Is in the midst of delicates to need,
And ev'n in Paradise to be a weed.

Ah my deare Father, ease my smart!
  These contrarieties crush me. These crosse
    actions
Doe winde a rope about, and cut my heart.
    And yet since these thy contradictions
Are properly a crosse felt by thy sonne —
With but foure words, my words, *Thy will be done.*

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THE PILGRIMAGE

INTRODUCTORY:

Hebrews xi, 14. "The characteristic of Herbert's fancy is fruitfulness. The poetry, like the theology, of that age, put all learning into an abridgement. A course of lectures flowed into the rich essence of a single sermon. A month's seed bloomed in an ode. The 17th was the contradiction of the 19th century; the object being then to give the most thought in the smallest space, as now to sow the widest field with the frugallest corn. Herbert's PILGRIMAGE is an example. Written, probably, before Bunyan was born, — certainly while he was an infant, — it contains all the Progress of the Pilgrim in outline. We are shown the gloomy cave of Desperation, the Rock of Pride, the Mead of Fancy, the Copse of Care, the Wild Heath where the traveller is robbed of his gold, and the gladsome Hill that promises a fair prospect, but only yields a lake of brackish water on the top. Such a composition would hardly escape the notice of that Spenser of the people, who afterwards gave breadth and animation and figures to the scene:" R. A. Willmott.

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DATE:

Not found in W. I place this later than LOVE UNKNOWN because that contains no mention of coming death, and advances no farther than the fifth stanza of this. Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress was published in 1678.

METRE:

Used only here, but it closely resembles that of PEACE, IV, 173.

SUBJECT:

Herbert's autobiography, such as he had given before in AFFLICTION, IV, 135, and in LOVE UNKNOWN, V, 179; and such as Tennyson gave in Merlin and the Gleam.

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NOTES:

1. The *hill*=the priesthood, which, from a boy, he expected to attain.
4. *Desperation*=distrust of himself, as shown in THE PRIESTHOOD, IV, 169.
5. At one time he doubts whether he is fit for the priesthood; at another whether the priesthood is fit for a man of his high breeding.
7. He was Reader in Rhetoric at Trinity College, Orator of the University, and had already acquired a name in poetry and fine letters.
10. Life was passing.
11. *Care's cops*=bewildering woods. This and the following stanza refer to the period which I have called The Crisis, and particularly to the experiences described in VANITIE, IV, 153, and FRAILTIE, IV, 155.
17. A play on the double meaning of *Angell*=a coin worth ten shillings, and a heavenly guardian. In the latter sense it may refer to his marriage, which immediately preceded his taking orders. The work of a friend in saving Herbert is also alluded to in LOVE UNKNOWN, V, 181, l. 43, and possibly in PEACE, IV, 175, l. 19.

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THE PILGRIMAGE

I TRAVELL'D on, seeing the hill where lay
My expectation.
A long it was and weary way.
The gloomy cave of Desperation
I left on th' one, and on the other side
The rock of Pride.

And so I came to phansie's medow strow'd
With many a flower.
Fain would I here have made abode,
But I was quicken'd by my houre.
So to care's cops I came, and there got through
With much ado.

That led me to the wilde of passion, which
Some call the wold;
A wasted place, but sometimes rich.
Here I was robb'd of all my gold
Save one good Angell, which a friend had ti'd
Close to my side.

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19. The priesthood at Bemerton, which he found disappointing; cf. LOVE UNKNOWN, V, 181, 183, l. 50–53, and THE CROSSE, V, 233, l. 19–31.
23. His parish life was stagnant and tasteless.
28. It had not proved what he had imagined in THE CALL, V, 9, l. 2.
31. The heavenly priesthood.
33. Cf. THE DISCHARGE, V, 189, l. 38–40.
36. A *chair* = the sedan-chair, a noble mode of conveyance, which was being introduced into England in Herbert's later years. Cf. MORTIFICATION, IV, 57, l. 29.

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At length I got unto the gladsome hill,
Where lay my hope,
Where lay my heart. And climbing still,
When I had gain'd the brow and top,
A lake of brackish waters on the ground
Was all I found.

With that abash'd and struck with many a sting
Of swarming fears,
I fell and cry'd, Alas my King!
Can both the way and end be tears?
Yet taking heart I rose, and then perceiv'd
I was deceiv'd;

My hill was further. So I flung away,
Yet heard a crie
Just as I went, *None goes that way*
And lives! If that be all, said I,
After so foul a journey death is fair,
And but a chair.

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TEXTUAL VARIATIONS OF THE MANUSCRIPTS

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TEXTUAL VARIATIONS

THE CALL (p. 9):

4. I have adopted the reading of B. Ed. 1633 by a manifest error reads, *And such a.*

PROVIDENCE (p. 79):

102. For *furres* B. reads *furre.*

CHURCH-RENTS AND SCHISMES (p. 105):

In the title B. reads CHURCH-RENTS OR SCHISMS.

1. For *chair* B. reads *place.*

18. For *faded* B. reads *vaded.*

JUSTICE (p. 117):

10. For *tort'ring* B. reads *torturing.*

BUSINESSE (p. 139):

29. For *space* B. reads *spare.*

THE PULLEY (p. 149):

3. For *him* B. reads *his.*

THE FAMILIE (p. 185):

3. For *pulling* B. reads *puling.*

THE SIZE (p. 193):

5. For *springs* B. reads *strings.*

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